



Iraq protests overflight by Israeli planes

UNITED NATIONS (R) — Iraq charged in a letter to the U.N. Secretary-General Tuesday that four Israeli F-15 fighters, coming from the direction of Syria, overflew Iraqi territory for 30 minutes last Friday before entering Saudi Arabian airspace. Iraq has frequently complained to the United Nations since the end of the Gulf war about overflights by United States aircraft. But this is believed to be the first such complaint in recent memory about an overflight by Israel, which in 1981 bombed and destroyed an Iraqi nuclear reactor. Iraqi Foreign Minister Ahmad Hassan Khudayyer, whose letter was dated Oct. 6, said four Israeli F-15 planes "coming from Syrian airspace and flying at low altitude, crossed the northwest border of Iraq," at 1049 hours local time on Oct. 4. He said the planes climbed to an altitude of between 7,000 metres and 9,000 metres, overflew the regions of Al Kaim and Al Wafid, and then headed at a low altitude for the region of Al Nadiyah on the Iraqi-Saudi Arabian border, entering Saudi airspace at 1119 hours local time. Iraq called this a grave violation of Iraqi airspace and said it "coincides with the launching of the iniquitous campaign orchestrated by well-known international circles aimed at harming Iraq."

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية تصدر بالانجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الاردنية، الراي.

Pankin planning trip to Middle East

MOSCOW (R) — Soviet Foreign Minister Boris Pankin is planning a visit to the Middle East to discuss a proposed peace conference, a deputy foreign minister said Tuesday. "In particular, the choice of a time for that visit is being discussed, and which countries he will visit," Alexei Obukhov told a news conference. Mr. Obukhov said the peace conference would be discussed during the trip, but gave no further details. In Washington a U.S. spokeswoman said Secretary of State James Baker would leave Saturday for his eighth trip to the Middle East to try and facilitate for the conference (see story below). Mr. Pankin's predecessor, Alexander Beasmerlykh, sacked after the failed August coup, was planning a Middle East trip during the summer but it was never realised. While the United States has taken the dominant role in efforts to resolve one of the world's most difficult conflicts, it has been keen to have Moscow in a supporting role. The Kremlin for decades championed the Arab cause though it has now established a substantial array of consular and other ties with Israel. Formal diplomatic relations, broken by Moscow in 1967, have yet to be reestablished.

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Iraq lifts visa rule

AMMAN (Petra) — The Iraqi government has decided to cancel visa requirements for Jordanians wishing to visit Iraq, according to an official source at the Iraqi embassy here. The source expressed the Iraqi leadership's pride in the Jordanian citizens for their understanding of the exceptional circumstances that required the imposition of visa requirements in May.

Syrian-Egyptian summit soon

CAIRO (R) — The presidents of Egypt and Syria are expected to meet ahead of coordination talks between the Arab states bordering Israel, officials said Tuesday. Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Mousa told reporters in Cairo, "we expect a summit to be held soon between presidents Hosni Mubarak (of Egypt) and Hafez Al Assad (of Syria)." Mr. Mousa flew to Syria Monday with a message from Mr. Mubarak and diplomats expect the summit to be held in Damascus. The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) is trying to convene a meeting with the leaders or foreign ministers of Egypt, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan to coordinate a united Arab stand ahead of the Middle East peace conference later this month. Mr. Mousa said contacts between the five parties were still underway to prepare for the proposed meeting.

Israel elected to office at U.N. meeting

CAIRO (R) — Israel, for the first time in 15 years, was elected Tuesday to an official post at a U.N. meeting on the Mediterranean environment attended by several Arab states, delegates said. The host country Egypt was elected chairman of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) meeting of the so-called Mediterranean Contracting Parties, with Monaco and Tunisia as vice chairmen. Israel was elected rapporteur. The meeting, which opened on Tuesday, is being attended by the European Community and 16 members.

All plans to take on U.S. Zionist lobby

CAIRO (R) — Former world heavyweight boxing champion Mohammed Ali left Egypt Tuesday vowing to set up an Islamic lobby in the United States to fight the influence of the Zionist lobby. "President Hosni Mubarak has promised to help to combat the Zionist lobby in the United States," Mr. Ali said in a statement at Cairo airport. Mr. Ali, 49, met Mr. Mubarak during two weeks spent in Egypt as a guest of honour at the African Games. He left Cairo for Damascus, where he said he would discuss the lobby idea with Syrian officials.

Soviet Turkmenia's president visits Iran

NICOSIA (R) — Soviet Turkmenia's president arrived in Tehran Tuesday with 65 political, economic and religious officials, the Iranian news agency IRNA reported. President Saparmurad Niyazov said his three-day visit was aimed at boosting links with Iran, especially in the economic, scientific and cultural fields, IRNA said. "After 70 years our people are free to decide about their fate and they are reviving religious traditions," he said.

Palestinian groups meet in Syria

JAMASCUS (R) — A Palestinian Marxist group and an Islamic fundamentalist group agreed to rare talks in Damascus this week to reject totally the Middle East peace conference proposed in Washington, an official statement said Tuesday. The statement, issued by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), said officials of the "FLP and of the Islamic Jihad movement had discussed developments since a meeting of the al-Azhar National Council (PNC) last month. The council welcomed U.S. attempts to stage the conference but said they wanted better terms."

Cabinet rejects call for its resignation, says critics should rise to level of responsibility

'It is painful to see some people placing personal interests above national interests'

AMMAN (J.T.) — The government Tuesday rejected a call signed by Parliament members for it to resign and said that critics should rise to the level of national responsibility as warranted by the circumstances facing the country. A statement issued by the Council of Ministers after a meeting chaired by Prime Minister Taher Masihi Tuesday evening and carried by the Jordan News Agency, Petra, said the government had not received the call from deputies of the Lower House on it to resign but was rejecting the demand nonetheless.

The cabinet statement also cast doubts on the number of deputies — 50 as claimed by critics — who were said to have signed the petition. In any event, it said, the

call was unconstitutional and stemmed from personal interests rather than national interests.

The cabinet statement said: "Despite the contradictory statements in this petition and the real number of those who signed it and despite the fact that it was not presented to us, the government likes to clearly affirm that this disruptive way will lead only to harming the higher interests of our land at a time when all of us say that the national unity and fortitude of the internal front and its strength are two inevitable necessities for confronting the external dangers and the internal problems at these critical times in the history of our homeland and nation."

"Such behaviour distort the image of public work in the eyes of citizens who want the efforts of those who choose to shoulder the responsibility of representing the Jordanian people to be aimed at confronting the chal-

lenges and contributing seriously together with the government to solving the complicated problems we are facing."

"We do not think that the manner of those who signed the petition is constitutional and it seems clear that there are contradictory motivations for those who undertook this act that the citizen can comprehend with his attentive senses."

"It is really painful to see some placing their limited personal interests over the higher interests of the country at a time when the people and the homeland are facing decisive challenges."

"Members of the government are making a sacrifice for the sake of their country by shouldering the responsibility in these circumstances. Thus we refuse attempts to cast doubts over them or their patriotism or abilities or

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Baker returns to Mideast Oct. 12 to finalise peace conference

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — U.S. Secretary of State James Baker will leave Saturday night for his eighth trip to the Middle East in an effort to finalise details for an Arab-Israeli peace conference proposed for October, spokeswoman Margaret Tutwiler said Tuesday.

"Secretary Baker has decided to return to the Middle East," Ms. Tutwiler told reporters. She said he would visit Egypt, Israel, Jordan and Syria and also meet with Palestinians in the Israeli-occupied territories.

"The purpose is to try to overcome the remaining issues and to finalise details that must be resolved before issuance of invitations and convening of a peace conference that would lead to direct negotiations between the parties," she added.

Mr. Baker will depart late Saturday night and return on Thursday, the spokeswoman said. However, she underscored that was merely the tentative schedule.

On past overseas missions, Mr. Baker frequently extended his

talks and added other countries and issues to his itinerary.

While the Arab-Israeli conflict is high priority, the Bush administration is in the midst of negotiations with the Soviet Union to make deep cuts in battlefield and long-range nuclear weapons.

A U.S. negotiating team headed by a Baker deputy, Under-Secretary of State Reginald Bartholomew, is due to wind up its talks in Moscow Wednesday.

President George Bush and Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev said at their Moscow summit last July that they would try to convene a Mideast peace conference in October and Ms. Tutwiler said that was still the target.

No date or venue has been announced but speculation has centred on Oct. 30 or 31. While many locations have been rumoured, U.S. officials at one point were looking for a venue that would be more remote, not a leading world capital.

Ms. Tutwiler declined to lay out the obstacles still standing in the way of a peace conference but

acknowledged that Palestinians have not yet moved publicly to establish a joint negotiating delegation with Jordan.

Ms. Tutwiler left open the possibility that ahead of his trip, Mr. Baker would meet in Washington with activists Faisal Al Hussein and Hassan Ashrawi who have been his Palestinian interlocutors during seven months of negotiations on a peace conference.

Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir said that invitations to the U.S.-proposed peace conference would not be sent without prior Israeli approval.

An official close to Mr. Shamir said Mr. Baker had shown Israeli leaders a draft of the invitations during his last visit to Israel.

"We have seen it, but the wording is not finalised," said the official, who insisted on anonymity.

The wording of the invitations could determine whether Israel agrees to attend the conference.

"We were told explicitly that without our agreement the invita-

Israelis release Hussein, Ashrawi after questioning

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — The Israeli occupation authorities Tuesday ignored right-wing demands for the arrest of two key Palestinian negotiators, clearing the way for them to leave for talks this week with U.S. Secretary of State James Baker.

Israeli police questioned Faisal Al Hussein and Hassan Ashrawi for 75 minutes about charges that they had contacted the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) but released them without imposing any travel restrictions.

"We are leaving tomorrow to Washington. We expect to meet Mr. Baker at the end of the week," said Mr. Hussein after he left the police compound.

Mr. Hussein and Dr. Ashrawi told reporters that they insisted on investigators they had committed no offence.

No charges were filed, and they were not detained.

The two are to leave with Gaza physician Zakariya Al Agha for the meeting with Mr. Baker.

Mr. Baker has met with the three Palestinians during several of his seven trips to the Middle East since the Gulf war to try to set up an Arab-Israeli peace conference.

Police Minister Roni Milo told Israel Radio before the police session that their trip would not be blocked unless the investigation turned up proof of an offence.

Mr. Hussein, a Jerusalem activist, and Dr. Ashrawi, a professor of English literature from the West Bank town of Ramallah, returned from abroad Sunday.

They were warned by police at

the airport that they would be questioned about reports they attended a meeting of the Palestine National Council (PNC) in Algiers last month.

According to the reports, they briefed PLO leaders about Mr. Baker's ideas on which Palestinians should attend the peace conference. Afterwards, the parliament agreed to the U.S.-sponsored negotiations.

A 1986 amendment to Israel's law makes it illegal for Israelis to meet with members of the PLO. Conviction is punishable by up to three years in prison. However, there are disagreements about whether the law applies to Palestinians.

Dr. Ashrawi told reporters that in addition to alleging she and Mr. Hussein attended the PNC meeting, they also charged that the two were carrying messages between Mr. Baker and PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat.

"I didn't commit any violation," she told police. Both she and Mr. Hussein said they reserved their right not to answer police questions.

Mr. Hussein said the talks with Mr. Baker would focus on new factors following the PNC meeting and a letter of assurances that Mr. Baker has been preparing for the Palestinians. He declined to give details.

Dr. Ashrawi accused Israel of "sabotaging the peace process instead of supporting it" by calling Palestinians in for questioning.

The Palestinian-Baker meeting planned for later this week could determine whether Palestinians attend the proposed Arab-Israeli peace conference.

Brotherhood to attend national congress

By Marianne Shalhin
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Despite the Muslim Brotherhood's strong opposition to the government of Taher Masihi and Monday's call on it to resign, the movement's leaders say that they neither intend to boycott the national congress set for this Thursday, nor have they ever contemplated resigning from Parliament in protest against Jordan's stance on the peace process.

"Our opposition to the government does not mean we won't go to the national congress if we are invited," said leader of the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan Abdul Rahman Khalifeh.

"(Our relationship with) the government is one thing and (that with) the regime is quite another," Mr. Khalifeh told the Jordan Times in a telephone interview.

"We can't oppose a congress that we have not yet attended," Mr. Khalifeh said of the conference in which His Majesty King Hussein is expected to address in a bid to strengthen Jordan's case for participating in the upcoming Middle East peace conference.

Other leaders of the Brotherhood have also denied that the group's 23-member parliamentary group had considered resigning from the Lower House in a move to protest Jordanian plans to attend the proposed peace conference.

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Israel soldiers stop vehicles from the occupied territories at an entrance to Jerusalem

Palestinians honour massacre victims

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Israeli security forces blocked gates and peered from rooftops on Tuesday as Palestinians prayed at Haram Al Sharif complex to mark the first anniversary of the massacre killing of 18 Palestinians.

Intense security, a ban on Palestinians entering Jerusalem from the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip and Arab fears of a repetition of last year's shooting restricted the number of worshippers to about 500 — a tenth of the total who attend regular Friday prayers at the Al Aqsa Mosque.

Israel took extreme precautions for the anniversary of the massacre, the worst between Israelis and Palestinians since the Jewish state occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the West Bank in 1967.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir reiterated Monday that Israel would never leave the Arab half of the city.

Palestinians staged a general strike throughout the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Clashes erupted Monday night in the occupied territories, and three Palestinians were wounded by soldiers who opened fire on protesters, Israeli and Arab reports said.

In the Jabaliya refugee camp in Gaza, soldiers opened fire to

detain an activist and accidentally wounded a motorist, military sources said.

Daoud Kaloub, 40, sustained a critical gunshot wound in the head and was taken to hospital, Arab reports said.

In the West Bank city of Hebron, soldiers shot a tyre-burning protester, Israeli Radio reports said. In Al Ram outside Jerusalem, a Palestinian was shot and wounded after allegedly throwing an ax at a car, the reports added.

In East Jerusalem, 12 firebombs were thrown at Israeli targets Monday night, causing no damage or injuries, police said. Four were aimed at the Ateret Cohanim, a religious seminary

whose goal is to move Jews into the Muslim quarter of the Old City. The others were hurled at policemen and Israeli vehicles.

About an hour before prayers began Tuesday at Al Aqsa, Islam's third holiest shrine, only about 100 worshippers had gathered.

Sheikh Mohammad Hussein, deputy director of Al Aqsa Mosque, said he recalled last year's events with mixed emotions.

"I feel pain because the victims were killed unjustly, but I also feel dignity because they were killed defending Al Aqsa Mosque," he told a reporters before Tuesday's prayers.

Jordan and PLO complete political working paper

By Rama Sabbagh
Reuters

AMMAN — Jordan and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), which plan to field a joint delegation to a milestone Arab-Israeli peace conference, have completed a political working paper clearly spelling out what they expect from the talks.

Jordanian and Palestinian officials said Tuesday the document would be presented at a proposed summit of Arab front-line states and PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat in Damascus.

Syrian Foreign Minister Farouq Al Sharaa said in a Lebanese newspaper interview last Friday that the Damascus summit would be held soon to coordinate stands but gave no exact date.

A senior Jordanian official said: "The paper, among other points, states the two sides' commitment to a comprehensive settlement based on U.N. resolutions 242 and 338 which call for the return of occupied Arab territories, including Jerusalem."

The resolutions call on Israel to

exchange Arab lands it seized during the 1967 war in return for peace guarantees from the Arabs — an idea rejected by Israel.

The Jordanian-PLO paper also demands a halt to Jewish settlements and says the issue of Jerusalem should be addressed.

At a meeting in Algiers last month the Palestine National Council (PNC), backed U.S. Secretary of State James Baker's plan to hold peace talks but did not commit Palestinians to attend.

The PLO insists on the right to name delegates and says they should include a representative from Jerusalem, which it sees as the capital of a future state.

Israel fears that including an East Jerusalem Arab could bring into question its hold on the city. Washington has suggested Palestinians should go to the peace talks in a joint delegation with Jordan to skirt around Israel's refusal to talk to the PLO.

Jordanian and Palestinian officials said that forming a joint

(Continued on page 5)

Calm in northern Iraq after clashes kill 400

NICOSIA (Agencies) — Kurdish rebels and the Iraqi government, trying to reach an autonomy deal for Kurds, moved quickly to contain clashes in which more than 400 people were killed or wounded, including 60 unarmed Iraqi soldiers killed in cold blood.

The top Kurdish trade who is leading the negotiations with Baghdad on autonomy for his people ordered an inquiry on Tuesday into the slaying of the 60 soldiers during three days of bitter clashes.

The Kurdish nationalist stronghold of Sulaimaniyah, where a Reuters correspondent witnessed the killing of the soldiers Monday, (see page 2) was calm although the sound of distant explosions suggested further clashes east and west of the city.

But in Baghdad the Iraqi government said that fighting in the north had ended on Monday following "coordination" between Defence Minister Hussein Kamel Hassan and Kurdish leader Masoud Barzani.

Mr. Barzani issued a statement in London through his Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) condemning any killing of Iraqi pris-

oners. "The KDP strongly condemns the killing of Iraqi prisoners, since it is a clear violation of the Geneva convention," the statement said.

Mr. Barzani was "appalled by the unwarranted killing of POWs (prisoners of war) and has demanded an immediate inquiry," it added.

Iraqis abroad said the killing of 60 soldiers was unprecedented. Iraqi troops previously captured by the Kurds were generally well treated.

"The Kurdish resistance movement has a long-standing record of treating prisoners of war according to the terms of the Geneva convention and has strictly observed the well-being of POWs throughout its campaign," the KDP statement said.

U.N. officials and fleeing Kurds said the fighting, one of the worst barfaps since the collapse of a post Gulf war rebellion in March, swirled around Sulaimaniyah, nearby Arbat and the towns on Kifri and Kalar 160 kilometres to the south.

Jordan urges big powers to control Mideast arms

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan has reiterated Jordan's call to make the Middle East a conflict-free zone and urged the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council to take the lead in achieving this objective by applying arms transfer controls.

The Crown Prince, in an address delivered on his behalf at an international conference in Barcelona by His Royal Highness Prince Talal Ben Mohammad, also reaffirmed Jordan's call for a conference on security in the Middle East.

"Arms transfers should be tackled through proper mechanisms for which the suggested (conference) provides an appropriate forum," the Crown Prince said in the address to the conference, entitled "The Mediterranean Challenge — Europe's Response."

"The move for arms reduction means eventually transforming force structures into a purely defensive charter," he said. "Simultaneously, the proliferation in the Middle East of advanced weapons, including ballistic mis-

siles, is even of greater concern. "Equal attention must be given to the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (nuclear, biological and chemical) and their means of delivery — surface-to-surface missiles," he told the conference, organised by the Bertelsmann Foundation.

"Managing proliferation is as important as prevention. In this respect the current focus is primarily directed towards Iraq. Needless to say, the process should cover the entire region," he said.

"In the past Jordan has called for a conflict free zone in the Middle East," the Crown Prince said. "On this occasion, I reiterate such a call by urging, firstly, arms transfer controls, particularly from the five permanent members of the Security Council who supply 85 per cent of the world's conventional weapons; secondly, the non-proliferation of weapons from mass destruction and a ban upon the production and deployment of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons."

See full text of the speech on page 5.

Iraq planned to make nuclear bomb — U.N. team

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — Iraq planned to design and produce a nuclear bomb at a research centre about 65 kilometres south of Baghdad that was only lightly bombed during the Gulf war, U.N. inspectors report.

Western intelligence agencies thus failed before the war to determine the significance of the Al Ather centre, which was only learned through documents impounded by a team of U.N. nuclear inspectors last month.

U.N. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar said Tuesday that it may be necessary to monitor Iraq's nuclear programmes indefinitely.

When asked by a reporter whether that would be required in light of Iraq's efforts to conceal its weapons development project within its civilian nuclear energy programme, the U.N. chief replied:

"That is a possibility, unfortunately."

Hans Blix, head of the U.N.'s International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), planned to meet with the Security Council later Tuesday and recommend that the council extend the nuclear monitoring indefinitely. He

also was expected to recommend that a ban on all atomic research in Iraq except into the use of isotopes with medical, industrial and geological applications.

A confidential report from Mr. Blix to Mr. Perez de Cuellar identified the research centre as the hub of Iraq's secret \$10 billion nuclear programme.

The report, a copy of which was obtained by the Associated Press, said Iraq's nuclear programme sought to develop an implosion-type nuclear weapon, which requires far more sophistication in electronics and computer programming than a Hiroshima-type atom bomb.

In examining the 25,000 pages of documents, the U.N. inspectors found evidence of much greater nuclear sophistication than previously suspected.

They found that Baghdad was developing a surface-to-surface missile, "presumably the intended delivery system for their nuclear weapon," the report says.

The investigators also learned of Iraq's development of a uranium enrichment programme. It has not yet been determined whether Iraq gained enough enriched uranium to build a bomb.

Civil war rivals learn to live together again in Lebanon

By Rima Salamah
The Associated Press

HAMMANA, Lebanon — Not so long ago, Hanna Hashiti, a Maronite Catholic, and Suheil Hasanieh, a Druze Muslim, were shooting at each other in Lebanon's civil war. Now they are in the army together.

They are among 6,000 combat-hardened gunmen from 12 disbanded Christian and Muslim militias who are undergoing six months of rehabilitation and military training under an Arab League-brokered peace plan that ended 16 years of civil war.

"I've buried the past. We're all brothers here now," said Mr. Hashiti, 20, during a break in combat training at the Hammana rehabilitation centre in the mountains east of Beirut.

He was a gunman with the right-wing Lebanese Forces, which used to be the Christians' militia.

Mr. Hasanieh, a onetime gunman with the Druze militia, the Progressive Socialist Party, said: "We're on the threshold of a new era and we believe in it."

The sentiments expressed by Mr. Hashiti, Mr. Hasanieh and others appeared genuine and none of the young men at Hammana showed any hostility towards each other.

But the Lebanese have seen other attempts at rapprochement collapse when sectarian hatreds boiled over. These differences have not been completely extinguished and perhaps never will.

Last month, seven people were killed in a shootout between Druze and Maronites in the Shouf mountains southeast of Beirut.

That could easily happen again, although many people

are growing more confident that this time they will be able to set aside the hatreds spawned by a multi-sided war that left at least 150,000 people dead and one million — one-quarter of the pre-war population — displaced.

President Elias Hrawi, backed by 40,000 Syrian troops, is gradually re-imposing government authority over the country, dismantling the sectarian mini-states that grew out of the war.

"There's no doubt in everyone's mind that the war really is over and that every man will have to adapt to peacetime," said Brigadier General Saoud Bitar, a Hammana camp commandant.

Eventually, 20,000 former militiamen will pass through four rehabilitation centres set up by Mr. Hrawi's government before being integrated into the army, internal security operations and other government services.

The overall commander of the rehabilitation programme, Brig.-Gen. Michel Maatki, said the former militiamen are not expected to stop being loyal to their communities. "But we want them to develop their loyalties in a direction that will serve the nation."

For 21-year-old Jihad Imad, the ideology of the Syrian Social Nationalist Party, to which he once belonged, cannot be erased entirely.

"We haven't changed our ideological beliefs, but our loyalty has shifted to the army, which represents a unified nation," he said at another rehabilitation centre outside the ancient port of Byblos, north of Beirut.

Khalil Yassin, a 21-year-old former fighter with the Shiite Muslim Amal militia who participated in raids on an Israeli-occupied border



An aerial view of the Bekaa Valley gives no hint of the violence that ravaged Lebanon for 16 years as the people there learn to bury old hatchets and accept coexistence (file photo)

strip in South Lebanon, said he joined the army to "work to build a unified nation to fight Israel."

Altogether, 6,500 Lebanese forces fighters, 2,800 Druze, 2,800 men from the Shiite Muslim Amal militia and 7,000 from the other smaller private armies, all aged 18 to 30, are scheduled to be absorbed into government services.

During rehabilitation, they undergo indoctrination that stresses national unity and loyalty to the state above allegiance to individual sects.

The army recruits are paid \$100 a month and get military training, including night fighting, hand-to-hand and close-quarter combat. Militia

training was often an ad hoc affair, learned largely in action.

The new recruits say army training is tougher than anything they underwent in the militias.

One man, scrambling across the ground during an obstacle course session at Hammana, screamed as instructors yelled at him: "Shoot me if you like I can't crawl any more."

Mr. Bitar said he is pushing his recruits hard "so they don't get a chance to think about politics. We make them play soccer and volleyball in teams made up of men from all the different sects."

Mideast water talks said delayed at U.S. behest

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — The United Nations and World Bank, technical experts and corporations to discuss what Ms. Starr says is a regional catastrophe — the scarcity of water and the pollution of existing water resources.

The summit was scheduled in Istanbul Nov. 4-8. A Turkish government announcement Monday said the conference was delayed to allow "all concerned parties to participate" depending on developments after the Middle East peace conference.

It was to discuss ways and means of alleviating water shortages which the experts say threaten the Middle East with particular severity in the coming years. Turkey was expected to seek support for a project to supply drinking water to the region from two Turkish rivers at an estimated cost of \$20 billion.

"It was really inappropriate to exclude any countries in such a conference. Politics of the past should not interfere with politics of the future," Ms. Starr said in a telephone interview with the AP.

Some Arab states, led by Syria, threatened a boycott if Israel participated.

"It is a pity that only one country, namely Syria, was able to prevent such an initiative. But, under the circumstances, it (the postponement) was the best thing possible to do," Uri Gordon, the Israeli charge d'affaires in Turkey, told the Associated Press.

Ms. Starr said it would be possible to reconvene the conference in March or April.

Turkey has already stated that it would consider inviting Israel if progress was made in the Middle East peace conference.

U.S. President George Bush said while preparation had advanced, no date or venue had been fixed yet for the Middle East peace conference.

Ms. Starr said it would be easier to get the Arab states and Israel together at a conference table for a technical issue once they had shared a table on a more crucial subject.

They are working to ensure flashpoints are defused as quickly as possible.

The intention was to hold a summit that would bring together

MIDDLE EAST NEWS IN BRIEF

Court to set procedure for Gulf dispute

AMSTERDAM (R) — The International Court of Justice will announce a decision in the next few weeks on the procedure to be followed in a long-standing territorial dispute between Qatar and Bahrain, a court spokesman said Tuesday. "The president of the court held confidential talks with representatives of both parties last week to ascertain their views on the procedure to be followed," the spokesman said. On the basis of those talks the court will publish an order in the coming weeks, outlining how the case will proceed. The two Gulf Arab emirates dispute sovereignty over a cluster of small but potentially oil-rich islands. Qatar opened proceedings against Bahrain at the International Court of Justice in the Hague in July. Bahrain claimed this breached an agreement to submit the dispute jointly to the United Nations court. The court spokesman said it made little difference in the long run whether a border dispute was submitted by just one or both of the parties involved. "In both cases all of the arguments are heard and the court arrives at its decision accordingly," he said.

Rebel factions clash in southern Sudan

LONDON (R) — Heavy fighting has broken out in southern Sudan between rebels loyal to long-time leader John Garang and a breakaway group, an Arab newspaper reported Tuesday. Al Hayat, published in London, quoted Nairobi-based Sudanese sources as saying a faction of the rebel Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA) led by Lam Akol had gained the upper hand over forces loyal to Colonel Garang. Col. Garang's deputy William Nyon had withdrawn his forces to the town of Bor to await reinforcements and Col. Garang had left Nairobi for his base at Kapota, about 270 kilometres to the south east of Bor, it added. Al Hayat gave no details of numbers killed or wounded in the fighting or where it had taken place. Previous reports have spoken of up to a third of the 50,000 SPLA fighters joining a mutiny against Col. Garang. Al Hayat said Mr. Akol, a former lecturer at Khartoum University, had formed his own national executive committee with 13 departments. Col. Garang's opponents in the SPLA have accused him of holding political prisoners and blocking famine relief efforts by international aid agencies in southern Sudan.

Four Chadians executed in public

N'DJAMENA (R) — Three soldiers and a civilian were executed in public at the race course in Chad's capital, N'Djamena, Monday after being sentenced to death by a court martial. The four men, convicted of murder and armed robbery, were executed in front of a large crowd after President Idriss Deby rejected clemency appeals. They were the first executions since the military government started to use courts martial to curb increased violence, mainly by undisciplined soldiers, in the Central African country.

Japanese naval units visit Egypt

ALEXANDRIA (AP) — Three Japanese navy ships on a globe-circling training mission arrived in Alexandria Tuesday on a four-day goodwill visit. An Alexandria Port Authority spokesman identified the three vessels as Katori, Hatsuyuki and Yamayuki and said they were commanded by Rear Admiral Takeo Tsukahara. The ships, on a 160-day round-the-world voyage, carried 890 men, including 150 cadets undergoing training, he said. During their stay at Alexandria, Adm. Tsukahara and his senior officers were to exchange visits with Al Sayed Ismail Al-Gawasky, the city governor, and other Egyptian officials. From Egypt, the ships will visit India and Malaysia before returning to Japan on Nov. 20, the port spokesman said.

Gunned-down Israeli was criminal

NEW YORK (R) — An Israeli man gunned down by a masked man on New York City's posh Upper East side was connected to Israeli criminals, a source close to the investigation said Monday. Uri Mizrahi, 38, was known as a man with ties to Israeli crime figures "involved with drugs," said the source, who asked to remain anonymous. "This was a criminal thing," the source said of the Saturday night shooting that took place before horrified tourists and residents of the wealthy neighbourhood. The ski-masked gunman ran up to Mizrahi on the busy street, fired six shots, striking his victim four times, and then fled in a waiting white van. New York police said they have no motive yet in the murder. They were contacting Israeli police, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Drug Enforcement Administration, and Interpol for information on Mizrahi. Police said Mizrahi's friends and relatives were not giving investigators much information about the Israeli, who had been in New York for three weeks staying with friends.

85 per cent of burning wells put out in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY (AP) — Eighty-five per cent of Kuwait's burning oil wells have been extinguished, an official of the National Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) was quoted Tuesday as saying. Sapud Al Nashmi, general manager of drilling and well control operations at KOC, said in a statement carried by local newspapers that 572 wells so far have been doused since the firefighting efforts began in March. Mr. Nashmi said most of the 160 wells still burning are located in the northern oil fields of Rawdstein, Sabreen and Um Qadir.

Kuwait University to honour Thatcher

KUWAIT CITY (AP) — Kuwait University has decided to grant former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher an honorary Ph.D. in political science in gratitude for her support during Iraq's invasion of the emirate. "This is the least we could do for the lady whose words were a balm to the wounds of our people inside and outside Kuwait during the occupation," said Rasha Al Sabah, assistant to the rector of Kuwait University for the community service and information. Ms. Sabah said the proposal was approved last Saturday by the dean's committee and is expected to be "rubber-stamped" in two weeks by the Higher University Council.

Greenpeace: U.N. responsible for ecological damage in Gulf

BAHRAIN (Agencies) — Greenpeace, ending a two-month assessment of Gulf war ecological damage in the region is holding the U.N. Security Council responsible for an "environmental disaster."

Greenpeace coordinator Paul Horsman, addressing a press conference aboard the M.V. Greenpeace ship, Monday called for an immediate meeting with U.N. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Caceres.

"The U.N. Security Council, which sanctioned the war, must bear responsibility for the environmental consequences and take charge of coordinating a comprehensive clean-up effort before even greater damage occurs," Mr. Horsman said.

Greenpeace conducted the survey on air, land and sea in Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Iran and the Gulf waters to determine the effects of Kuwaiti oil fires and oil slick.

"What we have found in general is an environmental disaster unprecedented anywhere in the world," Mr. Horsman said. "It is on a huge scale. Most of the Saudi Arabia coastline is still swilling around with oil."

Mr. Horsman estimated that about 700 kilometres of Saudi coastline have been damaged by the oil slick.

"Atmospheric problems are widespread, toxic chemicals are

raining out, will rain out, and continue to do so as long as oil fires are burning and smoke going into the atmosphere," Mr. Horsman said.

He said efforts to visit Iraq failed, despite a positive response from Iraqi authorities, because of the blocked Shatt Al Arab waterway and the presence of mines.

Nicolas Barcelo, another scientist with the environment watchdog group, expressed concern over the presence of nuclear weapons in the Gulf.

"There are nuclear weapons in this area, these nuclear weapons are coming here aboard the navy ships, during the invasion and the war and after that," he said.

"In the Gulf area there have been 1,000 nuclear weapons altogether on board of British, French, U.S. and also Soviet warships," Mr. Barcelo said.

"It is very hypocritical from the United States to ask (Iraqi President) Saddam Hussein to reveal his nuclear arsenal when they do not do it, they do not say what is on the warships," he said. "We do not think there are good nuclear weapons and bad nuclear weapons."

Mr. Horsman said one of the main problems was assessing the impact of Kuwaiti oilfires on human health. The emirate's government had not addressed the

issue, he added.

Those most affected by the atmospheric fallout — in Kuwait and in northern Saudi Arabia — should be issued with masks, especially schoolchildren, elderly and people with respiratory problems, he added.

Mr. Horsman said there was a chance the toxic chemicals could cause birth defects in the future. Studies were needed on the effects of hydrocarbons mixing with chlorine in drinking water, forming toxic chemicals, he added.

Mr. Barcelo said the U.S. guided missile cruiser Long Beach, tied up alongside the Greenpeace vessel in Bahrain's Mina Sulman harbour three days ago, had six nuclear weapons onboard.

He said Greenpeace was worried about the possibility of renewed military action to force Iraq to reveal its nuclear capability in line with U.N. ceasefire resolutions.

The group was also concerned about an increase in arms purchases by Gulf Arab states which joined the U.S.-led coalition against Iraq.

"We are very concerned about another war in this area because of the nuclear material. We think the Middle East and Gulf should be declared free from weapons of mass destruction."

Iran signals no new deal with U.S.

NICOSIA (AP) — An American engineer convicted of espionage was released before the end of his prison term after passing through "legal procedures like other inmates," the official Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) said Tuesday.

It was the first official word from Iran of Jon Patts' release.

Mr. Patts, 54, returned Monday to his boyhood home in Aiken, South Carolina. Officials in Washington had confirmed his release, but would give no other details, saying a minimum of publicity was one condition of his release.

IRNA, quoting a statement by the public relations office of Iran's judiciary, said "Patts had been released after completing five years of his imprisonment and passing through legal procedures like other inmates."

It was not clear what took the Iranians so long to confirm that Mr. Patts had been freed.

But the wording of the statement suggested the government wanted to eliminate any doubt that it had cut a deal with the United States, which Iranian radicals still regard as the "great Satan" and number one enemy of the Islamic revolution.

Mr. Patts worked for Cosmos Engineers of Bethesda, Maryland, at Iran's main satellite ground station at Assadabad.

Kurds shoot Iraqi soldiers, crush heads with rocks, pipes

SULAIMANIYEH (R) — Kurdish guerrillas gunned down at least 60 captured Iraqi soldiers, civilians finished off survivors by crushing their heads with rocks and metal pipes.

A Reuter correspondent watched the carnage in this Kurdish stronghold after a pitched battle between guerrillas and Iraqi troops on Monday afternoon.

Several hundred Kurdish guerrillas attacked a complex of buildings on the southeastern edge of Sulaimaniyeh after Iraqi forces shelled parts of the city. One of the guerrillas described the buildings as the headquarters for the commander of a force known as Iraqi Group 50.

A number of Kurds and Iraqis were killed in the fighting which lasted nearly two hours. The guerrillas began killing captives almost as soon as the Iraqis surrendered.

Six Iraqi soldiers were kneeling with their hands in the air when they were shot at point blank range without warning by a Kurdish guerrilla standing guard over them.

Several others were shot individually as they tried to surrender — or as they tried to escape after seeing what happened to their comrades.

But the worst slaughter took place inside one of the captured buildings.

JORDAN TVISION	
Tel: 77311-19	
PROGRAMME ONE	
16:30	Koran
16:45	Programme review
16:55	Children's programme
17:30	Educational programme
18:00	News summary in Arabic
18:05	Cairo news message
18:30	Local programme
20:00	News in Arabic
20:30	Arabic series
21:30	Arabic programme
23:00	News in Arabic
23:40	Play
PROGRAMME TWO	
18:00	Le Monde et Vous
19:00	News in French
19:15	News in Arabic
19:30	News in Arabic
20:00	The Family Man
21:15	Cosmos
22:00	News in English
22:20	Equal Justice
PRAYER TIMES	
04:13	Fajr
05:30	(Sunrise) Dhuha
11:23	Dhuhr
14:42	'Asr
17:16	Maghrib

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR	
winds will be northerly moderate and sea calm.	
Min./max. temp.	
Amman	14 / 25
Aqaba	20 / 32
Dead Sea	14 / 28
Jordan Valley	21 / 32
Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 24, Aqaba 30. Humidity readings: Amman 65 per cent, Aqaba 33 per cent.	
USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS	
NIGHT DUTY	
AMMAN:	
Dr. Abdul Al Ashhab	603989
Dr. Mohamad Al Shaghih	658878
Dr. Hanna Mansour	748364
Dr. Abdul Qader Al Lala	690488
Firas pharmacy	661912
Fordown pharmacy	778236
Al Asma pharmacy	670035
Nairookh pharmacy	626762
Al Salam pharmacy	636730
Yacoub pharmacy	644945
Shamsani pharmacy	637660
JERUSALEM:	
Dr. Lutfi Al Shalabi	(—)
Al Shams' pharmacy	(275825)
ZARQA:	
Dr. Mubashir Hijawi	(—)
Khalifah pharmacy	985417
EMERGENCIES	
Food Control Centre	637111
Civil Defence Department	661111
Civil Defence Immediate	630341
Rescue	630341
Civil Defence Emergency	199
Rescue Police	192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade	891228
Blood Bank	773121
Highway Police	940402
Traffic Police	896390
Public Security Department	630321
Hotel Complaints	605800
Price Complaints	661176
Water and Sewerage	897467
Complaints	787111
Amman Municipality	787111
Complaints	787111
Telephone Information	(directory assistance) 121
OVERSEAS CALLS	
Central Amman Telephone	010230
Reprints	623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs	661101
Jordan Television	773111
Radio Jordan	774111
Water Authority	680100
Jordan Electricity Authority	815615
Electric Power	636381
RJ Flight Information	08-53200
Ocean Airs Intl. Airport	08-53200
HOSPITALS	
AMMAN:	
Hussein Centre	813813/32
Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn.	642816
Akhil Maternity, J. Amn.	642412
Mallan, J. Amn.	642362
Palatine, J. Amn.	641440
Shamsani Hospital	661714
Shamsani Hospital	669131
University Hospital	845845
Al-Musader Hospital	667279
The Islamic, Abdali	666127/7
Al-Ahli, Abdali	661646
Indian, Al-Mulajjajin	777101/3
Al-Bashir, J. Ashhab	775111/26
Army, Marka	891611/5
Queen Alia Hospital	602240/30
JERUSALEM:	
Al-Haram Hospital	674155
ZARQA:	
Zarqa Govt. Hospital	(09)83323
Zarqa National Hospital	(09)900560
Al-Sina Hospital	(09)86732
Al-Hikma Modern Hospital	(09)99899
IRBID:	
Princess Beama Hospital	(02)22555
Greek Catholic Hospital	(02)22215
Al-Natras Hospital	(02)24700
AQABA:	
Princess Haya Hospital	(03)31411
FOR THE TRAVELLER	
QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT	
This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) Information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (05)53200-5, where it should always be verified.	
ARRIVALS	
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)	
09:00	Damascus (RJ)
Other Flights (Terminal 2)	
09:00	Jeddah (RJ)
09:00	Larnaca (RJ)
09:00	Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
09:00	Doha, Bahrain (RJ)
09:00	New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
09:00	Cairo (RJ)
09:00	Istanbul (RJ)
09:00	Madrid, Rome (RJ)
09:00	London, Brussels (RJ)
09:00	Paris, Geneva (RJ)
09:00	Vienna, Frankfurt (RJ)
DEPARTURES	
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)	
06:15	Tunis, Madrid (RJ)
11:00	Tunis, Damascus (RJ)
11:00	Istanbul (RJ)
11:00	Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
12:15	London (RJ)
13:30	Cairo (RJ)
13:30	Belgrade (RJ)
13:30	New Delhi (RJ)
15:00	Dhahran (RJ)
16:15	Riyadh (RJ)
16:15	Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)
21:30	Chongqing, Bangkok (RJ)
MARKET PRICES	
Upper/lower price in fils per kg.	
Apple	600/500
Banana	300/450
Banana (Malakassan)	350/500
Beans	250/300
Cabbage	160/120
Cauliflower	280/240
Cucumbers (large)	150/100
Cucumbers (small)	340/250
Eggplant	260/180
Garlic	850/750
Grapes	900/800
Lebanese	220/180
Lettuces	150/100
Macarons (large)	300/250
Macarons (small)	300/250
Onion (dry)	180/140
Orange	400/350
Peaches	700/600
Pineapples	500/400
Pepper (red)	240/180
Pepper (green)	360/300
Potatoes	300/250
Sage	600/500
Sweet melon	280/220
Tomatoes	240/190
Watermelon	150/100



STRATEGY MEETING — His Majesty King Hussein, the supreme commander of the Jordanian Armed Forces, Tuesday visited the Army's Headquarters. King Hussein, who was accompanied by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, was received by Armed Forces Chief of Staff General Fathi Abu Taleb and senior army officers. King Hussein had a meeting with Gen. Abu Taleb in the presence of Prince Hassan for a discussion on issues of concern to the army. King Hussein later met with senior army officers and headed the Armed Forces' role and expressed pride in its personnel. At the end of the meeting, several officers delivered speeches in which they expressed pride in His Majesty's leadership and voiced allegiance for the King's higher principles. The meeting was attended by the directors of the Public Intelligence Department and the Public Security Department.

10th graders to be required to take special classes under new regulations

AMMAN (Petra) — The Ministry of Education has decided to add military and national education as part of the school curricula for tenth grade students.

In the regulations the ministry issued Tuesday, it stated that military and national education will be a mandatory subject which should be taught to all students in government, private and the armed forces schools as of Thursday.

The programme will be a mandatory requirement for 10th graders and no students will be promoted to the first secondary class (11th grade) unless he or she successfully completes the requirements of the programme.

Also, no student shall be excused from attending military education classes, without any acceptable excuse to the Director of Education. The absences

granted should not exceed 10 per cent of the number of lectures, according to the regulations.

According to the regulations every student should take 54 lectures, which will be completed over a period of 8 weeks for girls and nine weeks for boys.

Upon completion of the requirements, students shall be awarded a certificate approved by the People's Army Command.

Fundamentalist students stage protest against Arab-Israeli peace talks

AMMAN (AP) — More than 300 Muslim fundamentalist students at the University of Jordan on Tuesday protested a U.S.-proposed Middle East peace conference.

The students, members of the influential Muslim Brotherhood Party, burned U.S. and Israeli flags as well as plastic dummies of U.S. President George Bush and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir.

The demonstration was originally billed as a commemoration for the first anniversary since 17 Palestinians were shot and killed by Israeli forces during stone-throwing riots at the Haram Al

Sharif in Jerusalem.

Plainclothes police surrounded the campus to prevent students from breaking away from the premises of the university, on the outskirts of Amman.

"No to the American peace project and no to peace with the Jews," chanted a group of veiled women preceded by bearded men.

The small group drew about 800 other student spectators.

The Muslim Brotherhood, the largest bloc in Parliament with 22 seats, and the Kingdom's most powerful political party, opposes peace negotiations with Israel

tentatively scheduled for later this month.

The group, similar to other factions in the Arab World, advocates armed struggle to recapture the whole of Palestine.

Leaders of the group have publicly threatened to launch a campaign of public disorder in Jordan, and instigate riots elsewhere in the Middle East once Arab-Israeli peace talks start.

Jordan, Egypt, Syria, Lebanon and the Palestinians accepted a U.S. plan to bring them to the negotiating table with Israel at a regional conference, cosponsored by Washington and Moscow.

Jordan, Italy finalise agreement for construction of hospital

AMMAN (J.T.) — Italy and Jordan Tuesday formally signed documents of a protocol under which the Italian government undertakes to provide a \$10 million grant for the construction of a hospital in Karak.

Under the protocol, the project will be carried out over three years by an Italian construction firm in cooperation with Jordanian companies. Work on the 100-bed hospital is expected to start in February 1992 once the infrastructure has been completed.

Last August, the Italian embassy in Amman said that an Italian construction firm was yet to be named to undertake the construction work, which is set up on a 6,000-square metre plot of land. The Italian firm will take charge of supervising the technical and construction work and will provide experts and designs as well as teams of specialists for the project.

Instructors will also be made available to offer training to the nurses during the implementation of the project in addition to providing the equipment for the new hospital, according to the terms of the protocol signed by Minister of Planning Ziyad Fariz and Italy's Ambassador to Jordan Francesco de Courten.

The Council of Ministers earlier approved the agreement, which was worked out between the two sides in Rome last June.

For its part, Jordan will offer the plot of land and the infrastructure which include sewage, electricity, water and telephone networks, roads and other relevant services. Jordan will also provide transportation facilities and administrative and medical teams to help carry out the project, according to the Council of Ministers statement in August.

Last Monday, the director of the Health Ministry's Hospitals Department, Dr. Mustafa Al Barmawi, said that the country was in dire need of more hospitals to cope with the growing demand on health services in light of the influx of expatriates from Kuwait and other Gulf countries.

New hospitals would cost nearly JD 36 million plus operational cost and equipment estimated at JD 9 million are badly needed in view of the situation, Dr. Barmawi said.

Dr. Barmawi added that the existing hospitals, including Al Bashir Hospital in Amman, can be enlarged to help provide an additional 600 beds.

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Baker returns to Mideast Oct. 12

(Continued from page 1)

tions would not be sent," Mr. Shamir told Israel Radio. "We will make all efforts to come to an agreement in all the things which we have to agree upon."

Mr. Shamir spoke amid reports that Washington was hesitating to provide Israel with assurances the Jewish state wants in advance of a Mideast peace conference.

The Israeli government wants Washington to promise in writing it will not force Israel to sit down with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) or withdraw from the occupied territories in exchange for peace.

Israeli newspapers have said Washington objects to giving

Israel a final say on who represents Palestinians. U.S. policy also has long supported U.N. resolutions urging Israel to exchange land for peace.

Mr. Shamir said he expected the United States to be an "honest broker" if it wanted to play a role as mediator in Arab-Israeli peace talks.

"To resolve such a deep-seated conflict as between us and the Arab countries, they must — if there is a mediator — be fair without helping or supporting one of the parties," Mr. Shamir said.

Israeli-U.S. ties have been strained in the past month over President Bush's appeal,

accepted by Congress, to delay for 120 days consideration of Israel's request for \$10 billion in loan guarantees to help absorb Soviet immigrants.

Also Tuesday, Jewish settler leaders from the West Bank and Gaza Strip announced they will lobby Mr. Shamir's government to abandon the peace process.

The leaders said in a statement that the proposed peace conference would be a "public lynching of Israel and not a conference for direct negotiations."

They also said they plan to stage protests during Mr. Baker's next visit to Israel.

Controversy erupts over farmers' use of underground water supplies

MADABA (J.T.) — A controversy erupted in the Madaba District involving local farmers and the Water Authority of Jordan (WAJ) following WAJ's decision to temporarily close local artesian wells.

Local farmers said that the closure of the artesian wells will cause great damage to their crops, especially those grown under plastic sheets.

The WAJ countered by noting that the closure was temporary and was necessitated by the scarcity of underground water due to poor rainfall over the past few years.

The WAJ actually allowed local farmers to pump water from these wells for two hours a day but the farmers said, in a statement quoted by the Jordan News Agency, Petra, that the amount was insufficient.

Shawqi Karadchek, WAJ Director in Madaba, said that the decision was taken following a thorough study of the water situation in the Madaba Basin. The district has not received sufficient rainfall over the past three years and local farmers have been increasing their pumping of water from underground resources in order to increase their profits, Mr. Karadchek said.

He added that erection of greenhouses and plastic sheets in the district was contrary to the Ministry of Agriculture's directives because Madaba farmlands depend largely on rainfall and not on underground water resources.

Madaba District products come largely from fruit trees which do not require irrigation like the vegetables in the Jordan valley, he said.

Mr. Karadchek said that since plastic culture farming in the Madaba District was an initiative of local farmers, they should find the means of providing water and should not rely on underground water resources, which are scarce in Jordan.

At the same time, a study conducted by the Agricultural Engineers Association in Jordan disclosed Tuesday that irrigated land in Jordan produces nearly 94 per cent of the total amount of fruits and vegetables produced in the Kingdom.

The growing population and the recent influx of expatriates will force Jordan to expand rather than reduce the area of irrigated land to produce more food, according to study quoted by the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

Since the 1960s the irrigated lands producing crops in Jordan have increased in area, reaching 550,000 dunums. Irrigation of these lands is conducted by pipe networks mostly in the Jordan Valley region, the study said.

It added that 550 million cubic metres of water were used for irrigation purposes in Jordan in 1990.

It was in the late 1970s that the pressurised irrigation systems were introduced to the Jordan Valley region because the open

canal systems were not efficient. The study found that the average individual consumes an average of 182 kilograms annually. But, due to the increase in population, the Kingdom was in need of an additional one million tonnes annually by the year 2005 against the present 510,000 tonnes.

The study recommended that farmers should rely more on machines in order to try to meet the growing need of vegetables and fruit in the last decade of the present century.

Concerned authorities should widen the area of farmed lands and more irrigation water should be made available, the study concluded.

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August crime rate registers increase

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan last August witnessed 3,002 crimes of different forms and degrees, registering an increase of 1,122 over crimes committed in the country in August 1990, according to a statistical bulletin issued Tuesday by the Public Security Department (PSD).

Most of the crimes were committed in Amman.

The bulletin said that 12.8 per cent of the crimes were considered major crimes while 44.5 per cent were considered as simple crimes.

According to the bulletin, a total of 15 murders were committed in the Kingdom in August, up six over those committed in the same month in 1990. It said that 14 persons were involved in the murders, four of them non-Jordanians.

As to attempted murders, the report said 20 of them occurred in August 1991 against 12 in August of last year. The report said that five cases of suicide and 41 attempted suicides occurred in Jordan last August. There were 39 embezzlement and fraud cases, 20 of which were in Amman.

The report said that August 1991 witnessed the occurrence of 654 robberies and thefts, registering 75 more over those committed in August of last year and that 427 of these were committed by young people. It said that items stolen ranged from cash money and pieces of jewellery to furniture and electrical appliances.

The report said that 583 persons took part in the robberies and thefts including 22 women and 70 non-Jordanians.

A total of six persons died last August from stray bullets, either by accident or fired during festivities, according to the report.

Observers believe that the current high rate of unemployment in the country, the soaring cost of living and the return of an influx of Jordanian and Palestinian expatriates to the Kingdom were partly responsible for the increase in crime.

By Nur Sati
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Popular Committee of Non-governmental Organisations, in an appeal sent to various international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) earlier this week, called on them to help end the embargo against Iraq and to take urgent steps to immediately save the life of the innocent and the sick.

The appeal called for food and medical supplies to be delivered immediately under United Nations supervision.

The letter also urged that Iraq should be allowed to sell its oil freely so that it can pay for the imported emergency supplies and to re-construct its infrastructures to become self-sustaining.

Also, the appeal asked that

all threats against the Iraqis on the part of the Western alliance should cease so that Iraqi civilians can feel safe at home.

The appeal was sent to United Nations Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), the Vatican, Caritas International, the Middle East Council of Churches and to foreign embassies in Jordan.

The appeal was made last Sunday to coincide with a visit to Iraq by Caritas International Director Father Musa Adeli.

"To show solidarity with the Iraqi people, a group of us will hold a conference in Iraq and send the message of peace to the whole world," he said.

Father Adeli was not able to say who is participating in the conference or how many organisations are involved.

Since the Gulf war ended, Father Adeli has been helping Iraqis in Jordan through financial and medical assistance.

"Each member of the Popular Committee for NGOs has sent the appeal to their own headquarters," he said. "We hope that we can have a positive answer from the world. I know that Caritas International is very anxious about the situation."

"The acute shortage of food and medicine is not only threatening the life of hundreds of thousands of Iraqi children in the short term, but has also endangered the future of the entire Iraqi nation through rendering the younger generation of the country potentially

incapable of developing physical and intellectual abilities," Father Adeli said.

The plight of Iraqis has prompted the U.N. Secretary General this month to submit a proposal to the Security Council requesting that Iraq be allowed to sell up to \$2.4 billion worth of oil in the next six months.

Mr. De Cuellar's request followed reports by the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and UNICEF on the "horrible situation in Iraq as well as appeals to the world from NGOs and humanitarian groups for urgent assistance to be accorded to millions of starving children and the sick people whose lives are endangered because of lack of medicine, children's milk and other food supplies," according to the appeal.



Her Majesty Queen Noor Tuesday talks with schoolgirls who welcomed her on her visit to the southern regions of Jordan (Petra photo)

Queen continues tour of south, promises to address problems

By Tamara Shukri
Petra

AMMAN — Her Majesty Queen Noor Tuesday continued her inspection tours of the southern regions of Jordan where she met with the citizens and listened to their demands.

She started the tour with a visit to Shobak, Qaa' and Petra in Maan Governorate and then visited the villages of Muhay and That Ras in Karak Governorate where she was briefed about the living conditions of the people in those regions.

After listening to the demands of people in Muhay and That Ras, the Queen promised to address their requirements and demands in light of the available resources. Residents of the two villages, which rely on livestock breeding, total 7,500 people. They com-

plained of unemployment, water shortages, electricity and the need for improved roads.

Upon visiting health clinics in Muhay and That Ras, the Queen stressed the need for providing better services and health care for the people of both villages.

She was accompanied on the visits by Minister of Social Development Awni Al Bashir, who is also the acting Health Minister. The minister promised to establish a primary health care centre by the end of this year. He also stressed the ministry's interest in improving services offered to citizens at That Ras Health Clinic.

Dr. Bashir also pledged the Ministry of Social Development's support for the two villages, saying that his office

will do its best to provide the required social services.

Also accompanying the Queen was Minister of Water and Irrigation Samir Kassar, who reviewed the ministry's plans to provide tapped water, through a 6-inch pipe, to Muhay village. The village is currently linked with a 3-inch water pipe.

Responding to a request by citizens to exploit artesian wells and establish dams, Mr. Kassar said his ministry had set up a new department to undertake evaluative studies on all desert dams in Jordan and to study the possibility of setting up new dams to accumulate water in them.

The Ministry of Education also promised to give priority to the educational needs of the population in these regions.

JCO project to raise country's fish production

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Jordan Cooperative Organisation (JCO) has begun implementing a project to increase fish production and contribute towards reducing the country's food shortages, according to JCO Director General Jamal Al Bedour.

The JCO, he said, is cooperating with the Fishing Cooperative Society of Aqaba in carrying out a pilot project, the first of its kind in the Kingdom at the cost of JD 1 million.

The project entails creating a tourist village, a fishing industry and a restaurant which would mostly serve fish to tourists and local residents, Dr. Bedour said.

The project will encourage and boost tourism in Aqaba and would create new jobs for Jordanian residents of the city, he added.

He said that the fishing village is bound to produce 200 tonnes of fish annually. The fish can be produced in special fish yards in the sea or in fresh water ponds on shore within the same zone.

The JCO is also planning to purchase a modern fishing boat in order to catch fish in the high seas.

Dr. Bedour said there are plans to set up a plant to build fishing boats and carry out the maintenance they need and another to set up a handicraft industry benefiting from the shells found in the sea and the palm trees found in Aqaba.

The project entails setting up a special aquarium to display various types of fish next to the restaurant and a special zone for people wishing to fish.

According to Dr. Bedour, the JCO has now started work on the basic utilities and buildings and is purchasing the required fishing equipment, cold storage facilities and management offices.

The Ministry of Planning has received details of the project and will help the JCO raise sufficient funds to finance the project, Dr. Bedour said.

He said that the project, which will take three years to complete, is expected to increase Jordan's fish production at a time when the country imports 14,000 tonnes of fish every year. Jordan currently catches 100 tonnes of fish annually.

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

Prime minister to meet geologists

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Taher Masri Wednesday will meet with the president and members of the Jordanian Geologists Association (JGA) to discuss their problems demands, according to Director General of the Natural Resources Authority (NRA) Kamal Jreissat. Mr. Jreissat said in a meeting with representatives of the geologists that democracy requires continued interaction and exchange of views between all parties and that the government will fulfil the geologists' demands within its capabilities. Mr. Jreissat Tuesday received a memorandum from the JGA explaining their demands.

Committee to start meetings Wednesday

AMMAN (Petra) — The joint Jordanian-Sudanese committee will start its meetings Wednesday at the Ministry of Industry and Trade. The meetings, which will be cochaired by Minister of Industry, Trade and Supply Ali Abul Ragheb and Sudanese Minister of Trade and Supply Ibrahim Obied Allah will discuss ways of enhancing trade exchange between Jordan and Sudan. The Jordanian side to the meetings will include secretary general of the Ministry of Industry and Trade, Ibrahim Badran and representatives of the supply and health ministries, the Central Bank of Jordan, the Federation of the Jordanian Chambers of Commerce and Amman Chamber of Industry.

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Economic Forum

Property boom, rents and inflation

By Dr. Abdalla Malki

DATA on the movement of inflation in Jordan, as measured by the cost of living index, suggests that the rate of inflation is strongly affected by house rents, as measured by the housing index. In the period 1976-80 which was, more or less, the period of unprecedented property boom, the index of housing rose at an average annual rate of 16.4 per cent. In the same period, the overall cost of living grew at 13.8 per cent.

However, the impact of house rents on Jordan's inflation is most probably underrated. The weight given to these rents in the basket of the cost of living index has been set at 16.85 (out of 100 points), or one-sixth. In my judgment, this is an underestimation because normally rents make up a quarter to one-third of a household budget.

Under all assumption, however, the recent very steep jump in house rents is bound to give a worrying boost to inflation. Given the present widespread unemployment, the already high costs of living and the wages which have been practically frozen for the last three years, the looming surge in inflation will heighten pressure inside the "social pot" with all its ominous repercussions. Thus, the purported increase in the wages of government employees will be both discreet and timely if it really materialises. But beware: it is better not to give a salary and wage increase than

to give it and abolish subsidies on the so-called basic consumption commodities.

With this weight of 16.84 points, statisticians will tell you that a 10 per cent increase in rents will push up the rate of inflation by 1.7 per cent. Assume that the recent rise in the rents of newly-let houses is put at an average of 50 per cent which is a conservative estimate to my mind. If we further assume that this rise will work its way into all rent contracts initiated during the next two to three years, we will gain an idea about the impact of the rise in rents on inflation. Roughly speaking, the inflation rate stands to creep up by five to 10 per cent in the period 1992-93, or at an average of three per cent per annum, on account of only house rents. This average has to be elevated to at least five per cent if due allowance is made for the underestimated weight of the index of housing and if the above-mentioned 50 per cent is reconsidered.

The wild jump in rents has understandably boosted the prices of property nationwide. More of that will follow. At least the new level of these prices will be sustained during the next two to three years. This means that vast numbers of property owners will reap windfall profits in the form of capital gains. Jordan experienced similar situations in the period 1974-82 and therefore it is not difficult to assess some of their macroeconomic effects, good and

bad. At least two cardinal aspects protrude out here, namely these related to consumption and imports.

Now what we have is not only high capital gains which generate correspondingly high disposable incomes but also extraordinarily high rents which produce almost permanent high incomes and thereby magnify the impact of the pre-mentioned windfall profits. High incomes tend to boost the consumption of big-ticket items (refrigerators, furniture, etc.). In a country like Jordan, where the import-content of consumption expenditures stands as high as 50 per cent, the surge in income leads to a surge in the importation of luxury goods (cars, clothes, etc.) and services (vacations and medication abroad).

In short, the increase in incomes and wealth concomitant with the booming property prices as well as the wealth effect of this boom (that is one's feeling that he is wealthy due to appreciation in the values of his properties even though he does not sell them) will jointly cause a marked shift in, or may even distort, the normal patterns of consumption and imports. Without passing a judgement on whether this is good or bad, this shift is one of the major economic developments that lie ahead of us and which our economic policy will have to cope with as the higher costs of living will add to the headaches of the citizens.

Time for parley is now

ISRAELI Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's speech to the Knesset Monday dampens all hope that Israel will contribute positively to making the projected peace conference on the Middle East a success story. To begin with he cast doubt that the peace talks between Israel and the concerned Arab parties would ever get launched. "Today," Shamir was quoted as saying, "we still do not know if, when, or where the peace process will start." He went on to shatter the peace parley idea with stiffening caveats which leave little doubt that Israel is bent on destroying all chances for peace even before negotiations begin.

First and foremost, the Israeli prime minister rejects outright the principle of "territories for peace" that is supposed to be the prime basis of the upcoming talks between the two sides. Second, he ruled out any effective role for the Palestinians by denying them their natural and logical right to name their own representatives. As for Jerusalem, the Israeli leader repeated the sterile Israeli position that the Holy City is non-negotiable. Equally disappointing is Shamir's interpretation of U.N. Security Council resolutions 242 and 338 as not calling for Israeli withdrawal from the Arab territories occupied in the Israeli-Arab war of 1967.

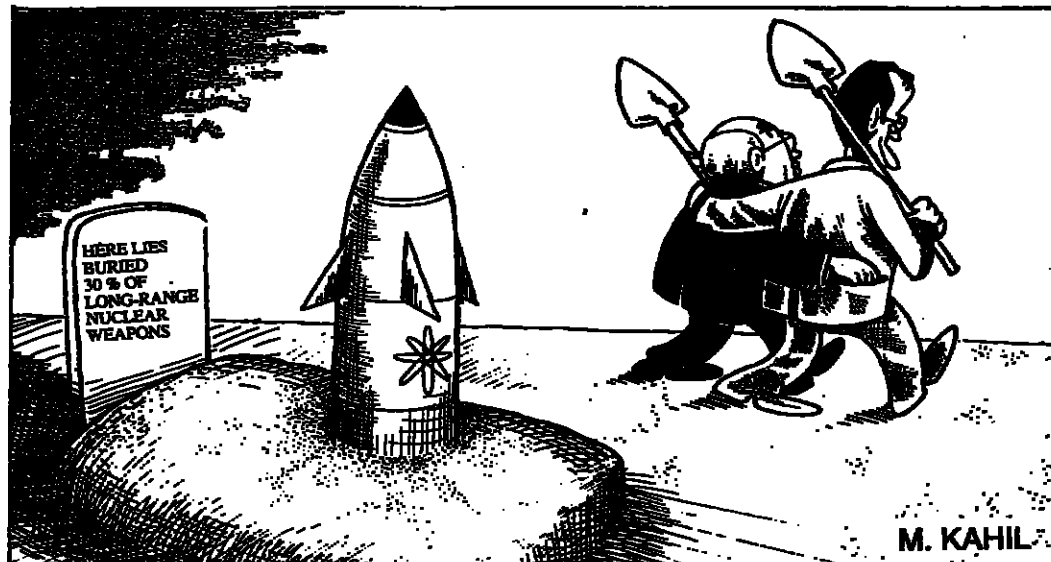
This uncompromising posture will further erode Arab confidence that the already controversial peace negotiations scheduled to get off the ground in the next few weeks will come to any meaningful fruition. The only redeeming thing about the hawkish Israeli leader's address to his parliament is the fact that he made clearer than ever before the true intentions of Israel towards the issue of peace. No wonder many Arabs are asking: "Why bother?" and go to a peace forum that is already doomed. The fact that Shamir's pronouncements had also stirred a heated internal debate in the Israeli parliament spearheaded by Israeli Labour Party leader Shimon Peres cannot be sufficient or comforting enough since the Likud and Labour parties do not part company on basics including Jerusalem and Israeli withdrawal from Arab lands.

The only remaining hope lies in the ability and determination of Washington to deliver on its solemn pledge to establish just and permanent peace in the Middle East. There are already several signals from President George Bush and his administration that the U.S. is firm and unwavering in its quest for a durable and equitable peace. As long as Washington is unwavering in its will to achieve just that, neither Shamir nor any other Israeli leader can undermine that goal. The best way to give expression to this strong-willed U.S. stance is to answer Shamir's cynical questions and set the venue and date of the peace conference at the earliest possible time. As long as Israel continues to entertain false hopes that the peace conference is a mirage, the other parties will also lose hope and confidence that the peace parley will produce any results, assuming it will convene in the first place.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AL RA'I Arabic daily Tuesday discussed the wrangling going on between the government and the Lower House of Parliament members and said that the media cannot help being involved and should warn the two sides that levelling charges and counter-charges can only cause harm to the national interests. The paper said that the continuing differences between the executive and the legislative authorities should be stopped and should by no means be maintained at the expense of the nation which they had been entrusted to serve. The continued differences constitute a game that endangers democracy and the Kingdom's struggle to cope with the numerous difficulties and hardships, stressed the paper. By openly attacking one another, the two authorities can by no means be adhering to the rules of democracy which the Jordanian people are keen to protect and therefore, one can only hope that the differences would stop because they can only benefit the country's enemies, the paper said. The paper called on the two sides to opt for constructive dialogue and stop interfering in each other's tasks and cautioned Parliament members that they can by no means bring down the government except when they cast a vote of no confidence when Parliament is in session, and that can only take place after the first of December when the ordinary session begins. Settling of scores between the two sides at the expense of the country and its people, said the paper, should not be allowed to continue, and the press will by all means continue to monitor the behaviour of the two sides in a bid to defend the march of democracy.

A columnist in Al Dustour focused the readers' attention on the chronic water situation in the Kingdom and said that the continued discussions and conferences that are being held and the speeches that are being made over the water question cannot solve the problem. Mohammad Daoud said that the water problem in the country had existed for a long time, but all one can hear at the conference is talk about a national strategy being drawn up or plans made to deal with the problem, with no effective measures materialising. The writer said that the numerous working papers being reviewed can by no means solve the problem unless practical steps are taken first to upgrade the second legislations on the use of water for various purposes and to embark on practical steps that can help the country find new water resources to meet the evergrowing needs. The writer said the alarm about the shortages of water in the whole Middle East region has long been sounded by local, regional and international experts, and it is hoped that practical steps can be taken to heed such warning before it is too late.



Destruction of short-range nuclear arms will take years

By Charles Aldinger
Reuters

WASHINGTON — It will take years for the United States and the Soviet Union to destroy or store the deadly hearts of thousands of short-range nuclear weapons, according to Defence Department and private analysts. But they agree that the process begun by President George Bush to remove balls of cancer-causing plutonium and enriched uranium from artillery shells, cruise missiles and depth charges should begin now without bureaucratic red tape.

While no concrete count is available, the Pentagon says the initiative announced by Mr. Bush and endorsed by Moscow could mean destruction or storage of 2,600 U.S. short-range "nukes" and up to 12,000 on the Soviet side.

The fissionable material inside the warheads ranges generally in size from an orange to a small sweet melon and weighs from about four to 11 kilograms, according to experts. It is surrounded by a layer of conventional high explosive to set off the nuclear blast.

"Of course you just don't take this stuff out of warheads and beat it into ploughshares with hammers. It's a complicated process that takes time to do safely," said one senior Pentagon official, who asked not to be identified.

Private analysts said the Pantex plant near Amarillo, Texas, where U.S. nuclear weapons are made and dismantled, has an estimated capacity of destroying some 1,100 such warheads a year

under normal conditions.

"The Soviet capacity is unknown. And while they are believed to have more facilities than the United States, one wonders about their ability to destroy or store so many weapons safely," said John Pike of the Federation of American Scientists.

Other private experts such as Chris Paine of the Natural Resources Defence Council in Washington said in interviews that the actual dismantling of so-called "battlefield" nuclear warheads could wait until later.

"The first step is to get informal cooperation to get the weapons quickly out of the field and off ships to storage under safeguards. That could be started within weeks," said Mr. Paine. "The president called clearly for quick consultation on that."

Defence Secretary Dick Cheney has told reporters that the United States will destroy some 2,100 artillery shells and short-range ground-based missiles and either dismantle or store warheads from another 500 naval Cruise missiles, bombs and depth charges.

The Soviet Union, according to Pentagon estimates, has 17,000 tactical, or shorter-range, nuclear arms and would probably destroy 12,000 of those to match cutbacks in the categories to be slashed by the United States.

"This is not an old-style numbers game in which negotiators try to determine whether changes are symmetrical or fair," said Pentagon Spokesman Pete Williams. "Both sides need to act now, especially the Soviets,

rather than to dicker about precise numbers."

Several steps are involved in dismantling nuclear weapons.

The warheads have to be taken out and put in special containers for shipment, probably by ship, train or truck, to special dismantling plants. The U.S. Energy Department is likely to avoid wide use of aircraft for such purposes because of the chance of catastrophic accident.

In the large number of American weapons that will not be stored for possible emergency use, the fissionable material in the warhead would be removed from its package of plastic-like coating of conventional explosive.

The plutonium "pits" could be ground into more stable plutonium oxide powder for storage, or reconfigured for submarine reactor fuel.

The United States does not use plutonium in its civilian power reactors, although other countries are beginning to do so. But the Energy Department could dilute or deplete highly enriched uranium in some warheads for power reactor use.

"There are a number of major long-term questions on how and where both the warheads or the fissionable material would be stored," said Dunbow Lockwood of the Private Arms Control Association in Washington.

"There will need to be major cooperation," he said. "The Soviet Union probably doesn't have the wherewithal to do this in a short time, particularly with their economic problems now."

Nuclear proposals show superpowers fear renegades, not each other

By Bryan Brunley
The Associated Press

MOSCOW — Pledges of sweeping arms cuts by the U.S. and Soviet presidents reflect their belief that the superpowers now face less threat from each other than from renegades with nuclear weapons.

Presidents George Bush and Mikhail S. Gorbachev have moved beyond the process of negotiations that characterised decades of U.S.-Soviet arms relations and are instead announcing unilateral steps to reduce tension and arms.

Significantly, they made their promises before either side had ratified the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, which was negotiated very painfully over nearly a decade and was signed at a summit in Moscow last July.

"We got more done in the past week than we would have in five years of negotiations," said a member of a U.S. team, headed by Undersecretary of State Ronald Bartholomew, who arrived in Moscow Saturday to discuss the superpower promises.

Behind the good intent of the gestures, both leaders have their own barely hidden agendas, which mostly overlap but in some cases contradict each other.

Mr. Bush, while acting unilaterally to scrap and mothball some American armaments, also wants to dismantle Iraq's atomic potential. Mr. Gorbachev also is backing U.N. efforts to deny Iraq nuclear technology.

Mr. Gorbachev wants to reduce the chances of Soviet extremists seizing nuclear arms for use in domestic turmoil.

Mr. Bush shares that goal and paved the way for Mr. Gorbachev by announcing unilateral U.S. steps a week ago.

Although the leaders are united in their major objectives, each tilted their promises to favour his country.

Mr. Bush sought to defuse Soviet demands for talks on naval arms control by announcing that he was pulling tactical nuclear weapons off many American vessels but not destroying all of them.

Mr. Gorbachev responded by removing short-range nuclear weapons from Soviet vessels and offered to open talks on destroying them. He also vowed to remove from service three nuclear missile submarines, with 48 missiles.

Mr. Gorbachev called a long-standing U.S. offer, made originally by then-President Ronald Reagan in 1983, for the superpowers to share anti-missile defence technologies.

The Soviet president also repeated the years-old Kremlin proposal to end superpower nuclear tests opposed by environmentalists.

Mr. Gorbachev said in a speech that Russian Federation President Boris N. Yeltsin and the leaders of other Soviet republics shared his opinion on the need to eliminate the nuclear weapons that are most difficult to control, including warheads on artillery shells and short-range missiles.

"By consulting with them, he is playing to their vanity as well as getting them on board for the cuts," said the member of the U.S. delegation, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Mr. Gorbachev left unclear whether he spoke personally with the heads of the four main republics where nuclear weapons are based.

Several steps announced by Mr. Gorbachev appear designed to move nuclear weapons to Russia from Kazakhstan, the Ukraine and Byelorussia, where they might become very dangerous prizes in political unrest.

Some of smaller nuclear

weapons are in Byelorussia, next to Poland and formerly a bulwark against the U.S.-led North Atlantic Treaty Organisation.

Mr. Gorbachev said he was removing from "battle alert status" 503 long-range nuclear missiles, including 134 with more than one warhead. He did not say which missiles, but the 134 likely include multiple warhead missiles in Kazakhstan and the Ukraine that have aroused international concern.

The Ukraine, the second most populous Soviet republic, has declared independence from the Soviet Union. Kazakhstan, one of the few republics that has not declared independence, is considered volatile because many members of its ethnic Russian population, concentrated in the northern part of the republic, want to unite their region with the Russian Federation.

Mr. Gorbachev also said he would freeze the number of mobile long-range missiles and place them in fixed locations. Those could include rail-based mobile missiles that have been in the Ukraine.

Besides advancing Kremlin interests vis-a-vis the United States and the restive Soviet republics, Mr. Gorbachev may be trying to trim his defence budget, which Mr. Yeltsin and other republic leaders say they will cut.

Destroying nuclear weapons often proves more expensive than keeping them, however, and the Soviets may find greater savings in their announced plans to cut the military from 3.7 million to 3 million men.

LETTERS

Dirty business or a poker game

To the Editor:

THE upcoming peace conference is a crucial "business transaction" involving the aspirations of a nation, the future of generations, the emotional wounds of traumatic events, and the desperation of years in exile.

It's "dirty business," involving legalities and covenants, shady wordings and double meanings. It's a business deal of immeasurable financial consequences, which could make a stock market crash appear "pocket change." It's a deal where credibility and reputation, business and income, employment and insurance, and future social security benefits of a nation are all at stake. It's a deal where equity could be proper and benefit, or get wiped out and end in bankruptcy. It's a deal of "boom or bust," with capital gained or lost in both monetary and human terms.

Let there should be any misunderstandings, this is not a deal for the faint-hearted, the well-meaning, the highly charged emotional the uninitiated eternal optimist, or the proud nationalistic crusader.

It's time for the cold-blooded business shark, the shrewd and astute negotiator, the experienced professional, the top-flight executive. It's time for a people to hold on to their seats while the heat is on, to keep the faith, and let the pros "hammer the deal."

It's "dirty business" of the largest magnitude, with some of the best poker players around the table. For some of them it's "strictly business," for others just as much is at stake. It's time to play a hand that is dealt without knowing how or who shuffled the deck, but as the cards unfold real life "poker" begins.

Maybe the best thing about a poker game is the option to fold the cards anytime, pullout, and keep the remaining "chips" for the next round.

Issam F. Abdallah,
Architect and Real Estate broker,
Houston, Texas,
U.S.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any subject they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication, however, should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld only upon request and under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing. The newspaper is not responsible for the return of unused manuscripts.

إلى من لا يعرف

Mideast peace depends on political and military stability

Following is the text of an address of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan entitled "Prospects for a peaceful settlement in the Middle East: The Need for New Thinking" at the international conference organized by the Bertelsmann Foundation — "The Mediterranean Challenge — Europe's Response" — in Barcelona. The speech was delivered on behalf of the Crown Prince by His Royal Highness Prince Talal Ben Muhammad.

Mr. Chairman,

The kind invitation I initially received in May to attend this conference requested that I comment on the cultural perspective of the Arab World. Subsequently, in September, it was suggested that I address the prospects for a peaceful settlement in the Near East. I regard this evolution as meaningful, not only because peace prospects in our region have significantly improved between May and September, but more importantly, because the issues of peace are in fact inseparable from those of culture.

In this regard I am tempted to refer again, as I did this summer in a similar gathering in Malta, to Frederick the Second who was renowned to have achieved a Christian view of Islam and a Muslim view of Christianity. He was of course brought up in the 13th century in the heart of the Mediterranean in Sicily. In thinking about peace in the Middle East it is of relevance to consider what the historians tell us about the background of Frederick the Second: "He had indeed had the good fortune to have grown up in Sicily in a mixed culture that uniquely combined elements of antiquity, Arabic and Jewish wisdom, the occidental spirit of the Middle Ages, and Norman realism. The intellectual life of his court reflected this heritage."

Ladies And Gentlemen,

I firmly believe that the prospects for peace in the Near East largely depend on our ability to achieve a trans-cultural objectivity in addressing the challenges facing us in the Mediterranean. I have recently stated that the forty-year-old cold war was not only wasteful in armaments and confrontation. The greater loss is perhaps in the form of those contradictions of the cold war that have been internalised in our

Dear friends,

New thinking is desperately needed for evolving effective policies for security and cooperation in the Mediterranean and the Middle East. This can help reinforce current efforts for achieving a peaceful settlement within the context of both the Arab-Israeli and the Palestinian-Israeli conflicts. For many years, I have referred to our region as the Eurasian rim. The Eurasian rim extends not only into the Soviet Union, but also towards our region. By bringing in that other missing partner in the Middle East, Europe can help improve the chances of success of the current search for peace and security in the region. As the title of the second plenary session of this conference suggests, partnership rather than patronage should be the key word in a post cold war Middle East. I firmly believe that the time has come for evolving our thinking in the direction of a new Eurasian security triangle encompassing Europe, the Soviet Union and the Middle East. Rather than complicating the issue, such an approach can help solve those allegedly insoluble problems in our area, and contribute positively to the emerging world order.

The Gulf war not only left the countries of the region confronting new problems. It has also demonstrated to the international community the challenge of considering longstanding and interconnected issues which the war further complicated. Apart from the Arab-Israeli and Palestinian-Israeli conflicts, these regional issues relate in essence to the interaction between people, resources and cultural identity. The region is crying out for a positive, more determined and balanced approach to its problems. As far back as 1984, in my book "Search for Peace," I called for "starting with a clean slate."

While longstanding problems have remained unresolved in our area, the advent of the nineties heralded historic changes and challenges on a global scale. Democratization and self-determination form the focal point of the emerging world

order, the human person is the centre of all challenges. Ironically, it is a period which evokes in its temper the ideals called for in the aftermath of World War I.

A process is in existence calling for certain basic rights to be enjoyed equally by all. These rights range from the political and economic to the humanitarian. It is no secret that the different countries of our region face such a challenge and must rise to meet it. The democratisation process in Jordan stems from longstanding traditions of pluralism and openness in our culture. Our recent National Charter, which paves the way for full fledged multiparty system, is a landmark along that route.

Within the context of human rights, I do not intend to single out the Palestinians under occupation, and dwell in the abuses of human rights politically, economically, culturally and educationally. But geographical proximity and historical involvement deem it necessary to remind of them and, furthermore, to ponder over the water issue. Settlement in the occupied territories is at the expense of the welfare of the indigenous Palestinian inhabitants. Arab consumption of water is ceiled by the military government at roughly the level of 1967, while each Israeli is said to consume nine times as much as his Arab counterpart (as reported recently in the Christian Science Monitor).

The water challenge should be viewed within a regional comprehensive context. It is often suggested that the next war will be over water. It is an issue which should be seriously and urgently addressed for the benefit of all in the region.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Within our vision of an evolving "new world order," it is relevant to consider its different humanitarian, social and political aspects. In Jordan we have evolved our thinking along the lines of a regional matrix, pertaining to a Conference for Security and Cooperation in the Middle East, (CSCME).

The CSCME is envisaged as a

regional process rather than a one-time event. We are not advocating particular solutions or blueprints, but a pragmatic and empirically informed approach. Its spirit is similar to that of the Helsinki process in which Europe has been engaged.

Jordan's conceptual approach is based on viewing regional security through three route maps: Military, political and economic. Factors along these route maps fall into three main groupings: Firstly, demography and the related issues of wealth disparities and migration. Secondly, resources/environment in terms of oil, water, land, debt etc. Thirdly, cultural identity or ideology/activism and their implications in terms of human rights, radicalism, armaments and terrorism.

The background paper which I have circulated to this conference gives details of that regional matrix. It relates the different challenges facing our region including many of those analysed in Professor Weidenfeld's excellent conference document. It aims at achieving a coherent global view that simultaneously allows an examination of those seemingly contradictory constituent parts. My intention is not to restate the contents of that paper but rather to emphasise that the prospects for a peaceful settlement in the Middle East depend on our ability to deal positively with those transnational problems. In the respect, I commend the efforts of the Bertelsmann Foundation in convening this conference and in promoting an objective understanding of each other's problems.

Honoured delegates,

Within our approach, the interconnected baskets are not only of concern to our area but have great relevance within an international perspective. For example, the demographic factor is of great importance to Europe. The Europeans watch with apprehension the explosive population increase on the southern and eastern shores of the Mediterranean. The deteriorating economic and social situation in these poorer coun-

tries of the Middle East inevitably leads to instability that filters into Europe from its trading partners and close neighbours.

Europe might currently feel the urgency of the demographic factor in the Southern Mediterranean region, but it is vital that the East Mediterranean is not neglected. Direct demographic pressures from that region have not yet been widely felt within the European Community. But certain North European countries (e.g. Scandinavia) have started to encounter demographic pressures from the East Mediterranean. The instability resulting from the demographic upheavals during the past four decades, felt in Jordan and represented by continued displacement of the Palestinian population, culminated in the recent exodus from the Gulf. In contrast, the settlement of Soviet and Ethiopian Jews in the occupied territories and Israel is supported on a humanitarian basis by billions of dollars from the outside world.

According to the United Nations, Jordan has been the worst hit country after Kuwait by the Gulf crisis. The losses inflicted on Jordan have been compounded by the recent mass influx of Jordanian and Palestinian returnees, expected to reach a total of 300,000 by the end of 1991. Heavy investments are needed in education, health, housing, municipal and public services, and new job opportunities. The direct financial resources required are \$4.5 billion, needed to barely safeguard the current standard of living. These are humble estimates in contrast with what Israel is currently advocating for its roughly 345,000 Soviet Jews — \$10 billion just in housing loan guarantees. Israel argues that the loans it wants guaranteed, and thus made cheaper — are for purely humanitarian reasons for immigrant absorption. I ask where does Jordan and where do the Palestinians fit in this altruistic global jigsaw puzzle?

The prospects of promoting peace and reducing the dangers of war, thus rest equally on political, (with all the related demographic and territorial implications), military and economic sta-

bility. This has increasingly become an apparent and crucial factor in any contemplation of security.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

A conference on security and cooperation in the Middle East (CSCME) can draw on the moral weight of the Helsinki process in Europe. I have on more than one occasion emphasised that the countries involved in "Helsinki" are integrally interlinked to the Middle East through the trinity of energy, armaments and debt. They are the main consumers of Middle East oil, its main suppliers of arms and its main creditors. It is no exaggeration to say that oil revenues in the Middle East have literally fuelled the arms race, which in turn has been largely behind the external debt crisis faced by many countries in the region.

The recent proposal from Brussels for a European energy charter, to which I referred earlier on, can provide useful guidelines for tackling constructively the issue of energy in the Middle East. This proposed charter outlines three objectives for the European energy sector including Eastern Europe: Firstly, security of supply, secondly safeguarding the environment and thirdly efficiency of production. If these principles were applied in regard to Middle East energy, then a great contribution to security will be made. Such a process should be viewed within what I have called as the broad Eurasian framework. It is in line with the newly unfolding historical pattern that is bringing Europe, the Soviet Union and the Middle East closer to each other.

In respect to the issue of the conventional arms race in the area, arms transfers should be tackled through proper mechanisms for which the suggested CSCME provides an appropriate forum. The move for arms reduction measures eventually transforming force structures into a purely defensive character. Simultaneously, the proliferation in the Middle East of advanced weapons, including ballistic missiles is even of greater concern. Equal attention must be given to the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (nuclear,

biological and chemical) and their means of delivery — surface to surface missiles. A comprehensive approach should be applied to deal with proliferation, which is no longer a purely technical or military issue. It poses an essentially political challenge. Managing proliferation is as important as prevention. In this respect, the current focus is primarily directed towards Iraq. Needless to say, the process should cover the entire region.

In the past, Jordan has called for a conflict free zone in the Middle East. On this occasion, I reiterate such a call by urging, firstly, arms transfers control particularly from the five permanent members of the Security Council who supply 85 per cent of the world's conventional weapons; secondly, the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and a ban on the production and deployment of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons.

Distinguished participants,

We must create the proper environment that induces confidence amongst people, develops exchanges and cooperation and sets peace on new bases. I believe that a breakthrough in resolving the Palestine issue will set the pace for a more comprehensive process as the CSCME. As you know, Jordan fully supports current efforts for convening the Middle East peace conference. Jordan has adopted a flexible approach regarding procedure and format, and has provided a suitable umbrella for a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation.

Our concept for a regional process does not exclude the role of other nations in helping bring the process to fruition and in communicating parallel experiences. The different suggestions for a conference on security and cooperation in the Mediterranean and the most recent call by the Western European Union (WEU) for a conference on security and cooperation in the Mediterranean and the Middle East, do not represent solitary voices. In the coming millennium, let us all work together to capture what Frederick the Second realised in the 13th century.

Cabinet rejects call for resignation

(Continued from page 1)

intentions. There are limits to disagreements and there are limits to disagreements in views and endeavours we refuse to trespass and emphasise the need to abide by them.

The government, which respects democratic norms, announces its commitment to these rules which are based on morals and honor and that it will not allow any tampering with or disruption of this country's security and stability.

"It will stand firm against favouritism and violations of law and legislation. It believes in the cause it is fighting for and in what it announced in its policy statement that its goal is serving the homeland and the citizens first and foremost."

"The government, which is keen to avoid any clashes between the executive and legislative authorities, is aware of its responsibilities in preserving the right of the legislative authority in carrying out its constitutional duties and is aware at the same time of the limits of interference in its terms of reference as an executive authority responsible for the security of the country and its citizens and providing the suitable atmosphere for solving problems that face it."

"It is now time for all to rise up to the level of the heavy national responsibilities and to avoid silly ques-

tions and think thoroughly of the perils facing all of us and to recognise the reality of regional and international circumstances surrounding us.

"Our aware people will never forgive those who contribute to wasting the efforts of the faithful and averting their efforts from heading towards the higher national goals."

Prime Minister Masri Monday issued the following statement in reply to a statement by the Constitution Bloc in parliament.

I have studied the Constitution Bloc's statement and those of its spokesmen. It is indeed regrettable and painful that a parliamentary bloc that we respect should resort to this kind of conduct and issue a rash and unjust campaign against the government through such statements filled with falsehoods and distorted facts.

The statement made it clear that there is no substantial difference between the bloc and the government over a specific policy or national stand.

The statement clearly declares that the Constitution Bloc was not opposed to the government's position with regard to Jordan's foreign policy and the proposed peace conference. There is nothing in the statement that

could be interpreted as reflecting any difference over a certain position or performance or policy.

The bloc's statement contained terms like "loss of credibility" and that the government "lacks efficiency, homogeneity and harmony" and terms like patching ... and others which transcended the accepted norms of dialogue. Such terms seem to have stemmed from a state of anger resulting from the desire to have ministerial portfolios. This is a painful phenomenon to which some people resort in order to express their political stands vis-a-vis the government, cabinet members and the government's policies.

Unemployment, economic imbalance and scarcity of resources are all well-known problems to the Jordan citizens and it is not ingenious discovery. This government, as all people know, is not to blame for these problems although it is doing all it can to find solutions for them within means and under the present crucial circumstances through which the Arab World is passing.

I have spent long hours in a genuine, objective and open dialogue with members of the Constitution Bloc and also during the parliament

session which resulted in a vote of confidence in the new government. It should be noted that the Constitution Bloc did not exist before the formation of the government and did not exist during the consultations that led to its formation. Yet what I heard from those present and who are now members of the bloc did not extend beyond pure personal matters and no one showed any objection except to matters related to representations of personalities and to positions. I thought that I had eventually overcome this matter and the sensitivity caused by being designated to form the new government which indeed witnessed opposition even before its formation and before its programme and policy were declared or its members known. But it seems that the personal factors were for certain elements more important than national interest even under the most crucial circumstances.

I regret to say that the bloc's statement contained clear falsehoods with regard to a meeting last Thursday, Oct. 3 with Mr. Thompson Hindawi. I met the man upon my own request and I placed before him the ministerial situation and asked him personally to join the government.

But he apologised and suggested that the Constitution Bloc be represented. I explained to Mr. Hindawi that the reshuffle will be very limited and that any attempt to make an extensive reshuffle will bring about a quagmire that would involve the redistribution of portfolios in accordance with the desires of the various blocs. Speaking from my modest experience during my earlier attempts to form the government and the subsequent creation of the Constitution Bloc, I can say that any other arrangement would cause more anger than satisfaction at a time when the government was, to a large extent, a balanced entity in terms of parliamentary blocs and geographic distribution.

Despite these facts there were some criticism of the government and I told Mr. Hindawi that I will take what he said into account but without any commitments and I said that I would inform him of my final decision. I also informed Mr. Hindawi that the reshuffle was expected by Saturday at most. I did try to contact Mr. Hindawi on Thursday evening to inform him of my intentions but I could not find him until Friday morning. I regret to say that such a small matter that occurred between myself

and Mr. Hindawi at a private meeting was included in the bloc's public statement.

Lower House of Parliament Speaker Abdul Latif Arabiyat described the petition signed by 50 deputies calling on the prime minister to resign as a gesture of political expression and opinion.

"All these opinions and views are healthy indicators and serve the best interest of the country and the citizens," he said in a statement to Jordan Television.

Dr. Arabiyat said he considered the petition as "a normal institutional matter designed to serve the public interest."

"The difference in the views and opinions is a healthy sign," he said. He added that the Lower House is now in a recession and as such it cannot discuss the issue of withholding the vote of confidence in Mr. Masri's government. The issue of confidence can only be discussed constitutionally when the House meets in its regular session on Dec. 1, he pointed out. There is no scope now for calling the House for an extraordinary session, he said.

The ordinary session was supposed to be held on Oct. 1, but His Majesty King Hussein used his constitutional right to postpone the House's session, he said.

Brotherhood to attend congress

(Continued from page 1)

"We have never and will never consider resigning from our elected positions because of a difference of opinion," said Brotherhood spokesman Ziad Abu Ghanimeh. "We are living in a democracy and we have stated our position vis-a-vis the proposed peace conference. We cannot stop others from attending," he added.

The denial came one day after the Brotherhood's deputies co-signed a petition calling on the government to resign.

Ahmad Oteish Al Azideh, spokesman for Brotherhood's parliamentary group called the petition "a political position rather than a constitutional statement."

Mr. Azideh also denied that the talk of resignation had ever been on the Brotherhood's agenda.

"The issue of resignation was never on the agenda and it won't be," said Mr. Azideh.

One member of the Brotherhood who asked to remain anonymous, confirmed there were rumours of resignation and he said they had begun when one of the Brotherhood deputies called on his colleagues to resign in protest against the government's stand on the peace process. "But his call was ignored by the rest," said the Brotherhood official.

Jordan, PLO

(Continued from page 1)

delegation will be no problem once the PLO gives its approval.

The PLO has asked the United States for a revised letter of assurance which will be reviewed by the PLO's 100-member Central Council shortly before a final decision is taken on whether Palestinians would attend the peace talks.

Mr. Arafat is due in Amman on Saturday or Sunday for his first official talks in Jordan since the PNC decisions. Together with King Hussein, he is expected to put the final touches on the joint delegation.

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Financial Markets
in co-operation with
Cairo Amman Bank

U.S. Dollar in International Markets

Currency	New York Close Date 7/10/1991	Tokyo Close Date 8/10/1991
Sterling Pound	1.7350	1.7320
Deutsche Mark	1.6802	1.6807
Swiss Franc	1.4735	1.4745
French Franc	5.7210	5.7240
Japanese Yen	129.60	129.93
European Currency Unit	1.2195	1.2187

USD Per STG
European Opening at 8:00 a.m. GMT

Eurocurrency Interest Rates

Currency	1 MTH	3 MTHS	6 MTHS	12 MTHS
U.S. Dollar	5.21	5.31	5.31	5.43
Sterling Pound	10.31	10.18	10.00	9.93
Deutsche Mark	9.06	9.25	9.25	9.25
Swiss Franc	8.00	8.06	8.00	7.81
French Franc	9.18	9.31	9.31	9.37
Japanese Yen	6.81	6.50	6.28	5.93
European Currency Unit	9.84	9.93	9.90	9.75

Interbank bid rates for minimum trading 1/2% (halves 1/400,000 or equivalent)

Precious Metals	USD/Oz	JD/Gm	Metal	USD/Oz	JD/Gm
Gold	358.25	7.00	Silver	4.12	.092

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin

Currency	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	.685	.687
Sterling Pound	1.1865	1.1924
Deutsche Mark	.4070	.4090
Swiss Franc	.4641	.4664
French Franc	.1195	.1201
Japanese Yen	.5270	.5296
Dutch Guilder	.3613	.3631
Swedish Krona	.1117	.1123
Italian Lira	.0545	.0548
Belgian Franc	.01977	.01987

Currency	Bid	Offer
Bahraini Dinar	1.7880	1.7960
Lebanese Lira	.0771	.0778
Saudi Riyal	.1824	.1835
Kuwaiti Dinar	—	—
Qatari Riyal	.1856	.1863
Egyptian Pound	.2070	.2150
Omani Riyal	1.7580	1.7700
UAE Dirham	.1856	.1863
Greek Drachma	.3650	.3750
Cypriot Pound	1.4500	1.4750

CAB Indices for Amman Financial Market

Index	6/10/1991 Close	7/10/1991 Close
All-Share	122.17	122.43
Banking Sector	102.90	103.44
Insurance Sector	122.57	124.55
Industry Sector	151.74	151.45
Services Sector	129.24	129.19

December 31, 1990 = 100

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at midsession on the London foreign exchange and bullion markets Tuesday.

One Sterling	1.7265/75	U.S. dollars
One U.S. dollar	1.1285/90	Canadian dollar
	1.6820/25	Deutschmarks
	1.8945/55	Dutch guilders
	1.4760/65	Swiss francs
	34.61/65	Belgian francs
	5.7200/50	French francs
	1257/1258	Italian lire
	129.90/130.00	Japanese yen
	6.1350/1400	Swedish crowns
	6.5860/5910	Norwegian crowns
	6.4875/4925	Danish crowns
One ounce of gold	358.40/90	U.S. dollars

Baghdad to open stock market next year

BAGHDAD (R) — Iraq, its economy buckling under the weight of a world trade embargo, is to open a stock market from Jan. 1 to inject cash into struggling domestic business.

The date of the long mooted project was announced by Finance Minister Majeed Abed Jafar and published in Tuesday's Al Thawra newspaper of the ruling Baath Party.

The aim was to "attract individuals' savings towards investments that have both profits for them and the national economy," the minister was quoted as telling a meeting of experts Monday.

The market aims also at helping the companies exchange shares and experience and to expand their capital," he added.

The market will operate in the building of the State Agricultural Bank in Al Rasheed Street, Baghdad's bustling business centre a few metres from the banks of the Tigris River.

Moves towards a liberalisation of the heavily state-weighted economy were first made in 1987 but only gathered momentum after the Gulf war.

Few details on the workings of the stock market have been made public but the newspaper said this week that foreigners would not be allowed to own shares.

It was not clear from the article whether "foreigners" meant Westerners, other Arab nationals or both.

Iraqis are permitted to buy shares through two state-run commercial banks, the Rafidain and the Rasheed. But they cannot trade the shares and their only attraction is a dividend.

Share trading would respond to the natural business instincts of the Iraqis, whose capacity for survival in the face of economic hardship is legendary.

Few conversations in Iraq start without some reference to the "hassas" the U.N. trade sanctions, which have stopped Iraq selling oil and importing goods, which many of the country's 18 million people once took for granted.

Rice, sugar milk and medicine are the most sought after items and trade at heavily inflated prices on a thriving but tolerated black market.

Iraq is allowed to import such goods, but complains that the halt to oil sales prohibits large scale purchases and even those authorised by a U.N. sanctions committee are snarled in red tape.

Air China begins new route to Cairo

BEIJING (R) — Air China, Beijing's state-run airline, launched a new service to Egypt, Tuesday while at home officials brainstormed over ways to improve the airline's miserable image.

The new link will connect Beijing and Cairo via the Gulf port of Dubai once a week, an airline official said.

The route expands the Chinese airline's international service to 36 destinations, but officials are worried that Air China's patchy record may be scaring off business.

"The frequent changes, cancellations and delays in the Chinese airline's flight schedules have brought complaints from both home and abroad," the official China Daily said Tuesday.

"The main reason for the lack of punctuality is loose management and a weak sense of responsibility," the paper quoted Ke Deming, deputy chief of the Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC), as telling a conference on airline service in Beijing.

Air China became the country's flagship airline for international routes when CAAC split up its domestic and foreign services into nominally independent airlines in the late 1980s.

But the carrier, like those serving China's domestic routes, has inherited CAAC's lackadaisical attitude towards scheduling, baggage handling and in-flight service.

Egypt introduces single currency market ahead of schedule

CAIRO (R) — Egypt has launched a single foreign currency market four months ahead of a schedule agreed with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), currency dealers said Tuesday.

"There were a few false starts," said the chief foreign exchange dealer at an Egyptian joint venture bank. "We were waiting for instructions from the central bank which came yesterday."

The pound opened at 3.311/338 to the dollar Tuesday, fractionally down on Monday's close of 3.311/337.

The government originally announced that an official rate used to import commodities and service debts would be abolished on Oct. 1 as part reforms agreed with the IMF to overhaul Egypt's ailing economy.

But bankers were confused when the central bank continued to issue circulars to the banks with primary rates different from the secondary free-market rates.

The Paris Club group of international creditors agreed in May to forgive Egypt more than \$10

billion of debt as long as it stuck to the IMF programme.

"The market's not really reacted to the news," another dealer said. "I don't expect much movement, maybe down to 3.330/350."

Under the IMF plan, Egypt was scheduled to unify foreign currency markets by February 1992.

But bankers said the government decided to move ahead of schedule because the difference between the two rates had been kept steady at about one per cent and the central bank had built up foreign exchange reserves of over \$3 billion.

In an unexpected turnaround, currency dealers say demand for Egyptian pounds has been greater than for foreign currency in recent months due to a string of government measures to curb inflation and imports and cut the budget deficit.

The central bank has slapped tight limits on the amount of credit banks can give private customers, and a sales tax introduced in May has led importers to cut foreign trading operations.

"Commercial letters of credit, foreign trade generally, is down because of the restrictions," a dealer said.

Businessmen and diplomats have said financial reforms have generally gone according to plan, unlike reform of Egypt's huge and ailing state firms, which has become bogged down by political infighting and bureaucracy.

The government, trailing in opinion polls, has boosted public spending and granted big public sector wage increases in the past few months.

In what some economists see as the result, the State Institute of Statistics has reported that consumer prices jumped by 6.1 per cent in September, compared to four per cent in August and 1.3 per cent in July.

It was the sharpest monthly rise since April but still lower than the increase a year before. Year-on-year inflation was 66.9 per cent, down from 71 per cent at the end of August.

Interest rates on key one-year deposits have soared to their highest level since February 1989 and now range between 69 and 77 per cent, compared to 60 to 67 per cent a month ago.

The election is on Oct. 20. Inflation has been a major reason for the government's loss of popularity.

Riyadh to begin issuing treasury bills next month

MANAMA, Bahrain (R) — Saudi Arabia plans to begin issuing treasury bills next month to help the government tap domestic liquidity and smooth out short-term cash flow problems caused by the Gulf crisis, bankers said Tuesday.

They said the bills, which will be offered in maturities ranging from one to 12 months, would also give domestic banks a viable short-term instrument which could be resold to private and foreign investors.

They will replace weekly issues by the Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency (SAMA) of 1.5 billion riyals worth of bankers security deposit accounts (BSDA's).

Issues of 1.5 billion riyals worth of two to five-year government development bonds — offered every other week — would continue, the bankers said.

"The government needs the money — approval from the finance ministry has been given for short-term treasury bills," one senior banker in Riyadh said.

"Government development bonds and syndicated loans will provide the backbone of the government's financing requirements. The treasury bills are intended as a cash management instrument to smooth out cash flow between major financings," he added.

Burdened with up to \$65 billion worth of Gulf war costs, Saudi Arabia borrowed \$4.5 billion from international banks for the first time last May.

It raised another \$2.5 billion credit from domestic banks in June at short notice. Economists

say state-owned oil firm Saudi Aramco — the kingdom's main source of funds — plans to borrow another \$1.5 billion from foreign banks soon.

Bankers said treasury heads of the kingdom's 11 commercial banks were summoned by the finance ministry to a meeting Sunday to announce the framework of the treasury bill programme, following lengthy discussions with domestic bankers.

A Nov. 1 target date had been set, depending on how quickly SAMA — which would act as agents for the bills — could set up the mechanism for them, the bankers said.

Four-week, 13-week and 26-week bills would be issued on a weekly basis while 52-week bills would be issued once a month.

The bankers said the amount issued would vary from week to week, depending on the government's cash flow requirements.

SAMA would set the yield on the bills rather than offering them through an open auction system where banks submit tenders with different prices. The other Gulf states offering treasury bills — Bahrain, Kuwait and Oman — follow this system.

The bankers said the bills would still be attractive, partly because their yield would be comparable to an improved return on BSDA's offered by SAMA. This meant the pricing would be better than on U.S. treasury bills.

Unlike the BSDA's, they would also be a fully negotiable instrument which could be resold to Saudi government agencies,

corporate and private investors in the kingdom and a limited group of foreign investors — mainly in the Gulf, they said.

"The bills should attract reasonable support but bankers feel the only way to go in the long run is the open auction system," one senior banker said.

Bankers said the bills would also limit the extent to which the kingdom's cash-rich banks invested offshore.

There would be a repurchase and reverse repurchase facilities for the bills which would translate into a floor and ceiling for return on overnight funds in the kingdom's developing interbank market, they said.

"This is a step forward to creating a mature and stable money market in the kingdom. It will provide an alternative to placing money with other banks," one banker said.

There is already a secondary market for government bonds which have been issued since 1988 to help cover budget deficits.

But bankers said the secondary market had not proved popular, mainly because Saudi investors did not like putting their money into long-term instruments.

Saudi banks already held an estimated eight to ten per cent of their assets in the bonds.

"Bank's appetite for the bonds has dried up. The government holds large amounts of bonds in their books and there's only so far banks are prepared to go to match them against short-term liability," one banker said.

Asians adopt common strategy to fight poverty

MANILA (R) — Asia-Pacific nations adopted a common strategy Tuesday to fight widespread poverty in the world's most populous region, calling for increased help for the worst off and more international aid.

On the second day of a conference of the 49-member Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), delegates approved a "Manila declaration" mapping out a social development strategy into the next century.

The improved international political climate had opened up new opportunities to cut military spending and divert the money to promote social development, the declaration said.

ESCAP Executive Secretary S.A.M.S. Kibria said the booming economies of many parts of Asia contrasted sharply with deeply entrenched mass poverty in several other countries.

"For too long attention has only been given to economic growth. Unless economic growth and social reforms keep pace with one another distortions will take place... including outbursts of political instability," Mr. Kibria told a news conference.

"This conference is like a catalytic event to see if we can bring about a certain pattern of development in the social sector. In spite of having the highest growth rate in the world, the region also has the highest number of poor people in the world," he pointed out.

Joblessness, homelessness, illiteracy, family violence, street crime, drug abuse and prostitution were among many problems still pervasive in the region.

United Nations Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar said in a message to the conference Monday that Asia's economic boom over the past three decades had failed to curb widespread poverty, and the number

of people living "on the margin of survival" was growing.

ESCAP, a U.N. agency, said two-thirds of the world's 1.1 billion people living in "absolute poverty" were in Asia, mostly on the Indian subcontinent and in China.

Absolute poverty was defined as "the deprivation of the basic needs of food, shelter, clothing and essential services such as clean water, sanitation, health care and education."

The Manila declaration outlines a three-phase strategy up to the year 2000 and beyond, covering population problems, health, education, employment, housing, the environment, disaster relief, crime and social security.

While governments are left to set their own targets, the declaration says international funding organisations should step up help for the region's poorest areas and heavily indebted economies.

were locked in a vicious circle of interest rate hikes which may hit their profits and damage the economy by worsening inflation.

"An interest rate including large banks has begun. The banks must reach an agreement. Otherwise the economy will suffer," Aydin Ayaydin, general manager of private Sekerbank, told Reuters.

Bankers say high deposit rates will push up borrowing and investment costs and hence prices in general.

"The continuous rise in deposit rates will make inflation worse," said Mumtaz Pehlivanli, general manager of state-run Halikbank, which raised its one-year deposit rate by four points to 74 per cent last week.

Turkish inflation resurges

ANKARA (R) — Prices and interest rates are taking off again in Turkey in the run-up to a general election.

The government, trailing in opinion polls, has boosted public spending and granted big public sector wage increases in the past few months.

In what some economists see as the result, the State Institute of Statistics has reported that consumer prices jumped by 6.1 per cent in September, compared to four per cent in August and 1.3 per cent in July.

It was the sharpest monthly rise since April but still lower than the increase a year before. Year-on-year inflation was 66.9 per cent, down from 71 per cent at the end of August.

Interest rates on key one-year deposits have soared to their highest level since February 1989 and now range between 69 and 77 per cent, compared to 60 to 67 per cent a month ago.

The election is on Oct. 20. Inflation has been a major reason for the government's loss of popularity.

But Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz told labour leaders Thursday: "A political party would be ill-advised to take unpopular (anti-inflationary) measures under the pressure of coming elections."

Economists say high credit rates, overspending by the government before the polls and public sector wage hikes awarded in July and August have already fuelled inflation.

The government raised wages and fringe benefits of public sector employees by between 70 to 190 per cent.

It also raised purchase prices for agricultural products and compensation payments to civil servants.

Bankers said Turkish banks

were locked in a vicious circle of interest rate hikes which may hit their profits and damage the economy by worsening inflation.

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EC delays sanctions against Yugoslavia to arrange new truce

THE HAGUE (R) — The European Community will delay implementing sanctions against Yugoslavia to allow EC monitors more time to arrange a new ceasefire accord, a Dutch Foreign Ministry official said Tuesday.

"There has been a quite situation since midnight and a meeting is now going on under the leadership of the Dutch head of mission with the two warring parties," the official told reporters.

The decision to delay the sanctions came after the EC said it would impose punitive measures if the two sides continued fighting beyond a deadline of midnight (2300 GMT) Monday.

The official said the head of the EC ceasefire monitoring mission in Yugoslavia, Dirk Jan Van Houten, met representatives of the Yugoslav federal army and Croatian forces at 1000 GMT to try to arrange the new ceasefire.

The Serbian-dominated federal army late Monday offered to implement a new ceasefire if Croatia agreed unilaterally to lift its blockades of army garrisons inside its territory.

Mr. Van Houten will press the army to regroup its forces and Croatia to lift the blockades in a phased operation which would be monitored by EC observers.

"This morning (Dutch Foreign Minister Hans) Van Den Broek telephoned Yugoslavia's vice minister of defence and (Croatian President Franjo) Tudjman and asked the parties to refrain from unilateral actions and go into this in good faith," the official added.

On the advice of EC ambassadors in Belgrade, the Community-sponsored peace conference in the Hague would be reconvened as soon as possible and leaders of the six Yugoslav republics would be invited to attend, he said.

"We are now looking to see if it's possible to meet tomorrow under the same arrangement as last Friday, but we have practical problems," the Dutch official said.

The spokesman said the ambassadors in Belgrade wanted



Croatian National Guards showing the strain as they try to relax during ceasefire

the EC to call the conference to keep up pressure on the factions.

Despite the delay in implementing the sanctions, senior EC officials will meet in the Hague Wednesday to discuss a range of punitive economic measures which could still be taken.

"The draconian measures are ready. Now we have to say that since midnight there has been no firing and the two parties have come together ...," the Dutch official said.

About 60 per cent of Yugoslavia's total trade is with EC countries and three quarters of that is with Italy and Germany.

"In so far as the ceasefire holds, the (economic) measures will depend on the political assessment of the situation," a spokesman for the European Commission said in Brussels.

Frustrated by months of fruitless mediation, EC ministers on Sunday said they would scrap a trade and cooperation agreement with Yugoslavia and consider

other punitive measures, including a full trade embargo.

But just hours before the deadline expired, Serbian leaders and the Yugoslav army asked the EC to guarantee a new ceasefire.

EC ministers said Sunday unless shooting stopped, they would abrogate the preferential trade pact and renew it only with "those parties which are contributing to the peace process."

The statement implied the EC was gradually edging towards recognising individual Yugoslav republics.

Midnight Monday was also the deadline after which Croatia and Slovenia vowed to move towards full independence after a three-month moratorium agreed with the EC on July 7.

Despite its threat of sanctions, the EC's action would be largely symbolic and there are no guarantees that punitive economic measures could be implemented swiftly.

Meanwhile, the Yugoslav army

silenced its guns in Croatia Tuesday after proposing a new ceasefire, but Croatian officials said the rebel republic was likely to reject its conditions.

Yugoslav media reported that most battlefronts were calm after the federal army offered to end more than three months of fighting if Croatian forces lifted a blockade of army bases on its territory by midnight (2300 GMT) Tuesday.

The head of an EC team of ceasefire observers in Croatia said Croatian President Franjo Tudjman had agreed late Monday to a truce. He did not say what terms Dr. Tudjman had accepted.

But, in an act of defiance, the Croatian parliament met to declare full secession from the Yugoslav Federation after a three-month freeze on independence moves and officials said the breakaway republic was unlikely to lift its military blockade.

"For as long as the federal army is present in Croatia ... How can we take away our guardsmen?" Croatian Foreign Ministry spokesman Anton Babic said in the Croatian capital, Zagreb. "They've got to stop first because they attacked first."

A senior federal army general met Croatian Defence Minister Gojko Susak in Zagreb to try to ease tension at the blockaded bases, EC officials said.

Fighting between Croatian forces, the Serb-led Yugoslav army and Serbs in Croatia who oppose its independence has fuelled fears that Yugoslavia will explode into full-scale civil war. Tensions increased after Dr. Tudjman's presidential palace was hit Monday by a rocket which witnesses said was fired by a Yugoslav Air Force jet.

Yugoslav Prime Minister Ante Markovic said it almost killed him. Dr. Tudjman and Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic — the three top Croat officials — demanded the resignation of Defence Minister Veljko Kadijevic for "attempted murder."

Deadline for Soviet pullout from Baltics 'unrealistic'

MOSCOW (AP) — The regional Soviet military commander said Tuesday that he cannot meet a Dec. 1 deadline to withdraw troops from the capitals of the newly independent Baltic states because of the critical nationwide housing shortage.

Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia set the deadline Monday, calling the continued presence of Soviet soldiers in the cities of Vilnius, Riga and Tallinn was "impossible and threatening."

But Lt. Gen. Valery Mironov, commander of the Baltic military district, told the Soviet News Agency (TASS) there is no place to house the soldiers.

"It is possible to withdraw troops from the capitals and accommodate them in barracks on three-tier (bunk) beds," Gen. Mironov said. "It is possible to set up a field camp, but all this requires a lot of money and time."

The Baltic states have demanded a rapid withdrawal of Soviet troops since winning independence in the aftermath of the failed Soviet coup.

Moscow already has removed nuclear weapons from the three countries and promised to gradually withdraw its troops.

The exact number of Soviet troops in the Baltics has always been a closely guarded military secret, although Lithuania says it played reluctant host to more than 90,000 alone. Latvia and Estonia have fewer, although the navy has strategic bases in Estonia on the Gulf of Finland.

Gen. Mironov was quoted by TASS as saying Baltic authorities were trying to halt military housing construction projects and have attempted to evict soldiers and their families from civilian housing.

"As the commander of armed forces in the district, I cannot turn a blind eye to the attempts not to let us complete construction of housing that is already under way, to the fact that almost 11,000 people have no apartments," he said.

"There are no grounds to believe that troops can be withdrawn overnight or within a week. People need somewhere to live," he told TASS.

The housing shortage throughout the Soviet Union is desperate. Eighteen per cent of the country's 290 million people have been on waiting lists for housing for more than 10 years.

Earlier this year, the Defence Ministry said 10,000 officers in Moscow and 5,000 in Leningrad were without housing.

The military must also find homes for hundreds of thousands of troops returning from Eastern Europe in the next three years.

Germany has agreed to help out, paying 7.8 billion marks (\$4.38 billion) to build housing for the returning soldiers.

President Mikhail Gorbachev has named delegations to conduct separate negotiations with the Baltic states on a timetable for troop withdrawals and other issues.

Pretoria, ANC trade blame for funeral killings

JOHANNESBURG (R) — The South African government and African National Congress (ANC) traded charges of complicity and incompetence Tuesday after the killing of 18 people returning from an ANC funeral.

Unknown assailants opened fire on a 15,000-strong crowd marching home from the funeral of assassinated ANC member Sam Ntuli Monday in Thokoza township, east of Johannesburg.

Hours after the killings, ANC President Nelson Mandela accused President F.W. de Klerk of callous disregard for the lives of blacks and blamed the government for the killings.

"De Klerk has let loose his hounds against the people ... it is untrue that this is black on black violence," Mr. Mandela said at a meeting in Boksburg, near Johannesburg.

However, in Stellenbosch near Cape Town, Mr. De Klerk slammed Mr. Mandela and the ANC for what he called outmoded policies.

"What the ANC really wants ... is to grab all the power in the country," Mr. De Klerk said at a party rally. He urged blacks and whites to shun the movement because it was dominated by Communists and trade union socialists.

"The ANC as it is now, in the clutches of radical and Communist elements, is not your friend. The ANC has proven that it has a long way to go before it can be trusted ... the ANC offers a threat to all and sundry," Mr. De Klerk said.

ANC spokeswoman Gill Marcus said Tuesday police could have tracked down the Thokoza funeral killers Monday evening if they had wanted to.

But police spokesman Craig Kotze denied police shared any

blame for the shootings and stabings and said black movements were not doing enough to sell peace to their followers.

He said ruling National Party members were not among the 3,000 people killed in political violence over the past year.

Police said Thokoza was calm Tuesday with people streaming to work as usual.

Watched by police in a helicopter and in armoured trucks, about 15,000 people attended Ntuli's funeral there Monday.

Police and witnesses said gunmen in a white van opened fire on mourners heading home from the funeral and then escaped onto a nearby highway. They said at least 18 people were killed.

"The question that has to be answered is how could this happen and how could they just drive away when there was a police helicopter overhead and the road was lined by police trucks," Ms. Marcus said.

She said the government was dragging its feet on the implementation of a multi-party peace accord signed four weeks ago by the government, the ANC and its main rival, the Zulu-based Inkatha Freedom Party.

"They have not done enough, not at all, and this is a matter of extreme urgency now or the peace accord will be destroyed before it has even got off the ground," she said.

She said the ANC and Inkatha had set up local committees under the accord, but nothing had been done at national level.

In Pretoria, Mr. Kotze confirmed that the accord, which includes a code of conduct for police, had not been circulated to any of the 115,000 members.

"It is a massive exercise. We cannot do it on an ad hoc basis, it has to be organised," he said.

NATO to cut aircraft nuclear bombs by half

BRUSSELS (Agencies) — The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) plans to cut its stockpile of nuclear aircraft bombs in Europe by up to half in the latest move in a new disarmament race to slash cold war arsenals, sources in the Western alliance said Tuesday.

The official declined to say how deep the cuts would be, but other NATO sources said up to half of the stockpile in Europe would be withdrawn or scrapped.

The official said the withdrawal of all short-range weapons would not take more than two years, although no exact timetable had yet been fixed.

A formal decision to cut the bomb stockpile would be taken by NATO defence ministers at a meeting in Sicily next week or by a NATO summit in Rome early next month.

The 16-nation alliance says that it must keep a minimum number of nuclear weapons in Europe to provide an ultimate guarantee of peace. It will now rely on aircraft bombs as its only deterrent based on land in Europe.

The White House said Monday that it was possible that Mr. Bush and Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev would hold a summit to discuss their nuclear arms reductions but that much work was yet to be done.

Greece. Britain has several hundred of its own nuclear bombs but it was not immediately clear if they would be included in the reductions.

President George Bush said two weeks ago that all U.S. nuclear artillery shells and short-range Lance missiles would be destroyed as part of wide-ranging cuts. The Soviet Union has since announced similar plans.

"We expect significant reductions in the nuclear stockpile in Europe, over and above the reductions in artillery and Lance," said a senior NATO official, who asked not to be identified. "What we're talking about is a reduction in bombs," the official told Reuters.

Exact figures are classified, but alliance sources said about 1,400 U.S. free-fall nuclear aircraft bombs were based in several European countries, mainly in Germany, NATO's frontline during the cold war.

Nuclear aircraft bombs are also kept in Belgium, the Netherlands, Britain, Turkey and

Prague, Bonn sign friendship treaty

PRAGUE (R) — Czechoslovak Foreign Minister Jiri Dienstbier and German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher initialled a new treaty on friendship and neighbourly relations Monday.

They signed the document shortly after German President Richard von Weizsaecker arrived in Prague for a five-day official visit, the first by the head of a

united Germany since Hitler's rise to power in 1933.

"I think the treaty is a good one ... it is not possible to have a better one at the moment," Czechoslovak President Vaclav Havel said Sunday.

The treaty, while paving a way for the future in a democratic Europe, leaves open some problems which have loomed over

relations between the two countries since the end of World War II and even back to the Munich accords of 1938.

Many Czechoslovaks have claims resulting from the Nazi occupation, while ethnic Germans expelled from Czechoslovakia after the war also want compensation.

With troops outside, parliament chooses judge to lead Haiti

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (R) — Haitian legislators, their parliament building surrounded by troops, ignored widespread support for ousted President Jean-Bertrand Aristide and voted under duress to install an obscure judge as provisional president.

The announcement late Monday that Supreme Court Justice Joseph Nerette had been named provisional president sparked heavy gunfire through the capital and came as diplomatic efforts to restore Mr. Aristide were crumbling.

Populist Port-Au-Prince Mayor Evans Paul, a major Aristide supporter, was arrested and beaten by troops at the airport.

Mr. Paul was trying to leave for talks in Venezuela aimed at returning Mr. Aristide to power. He also sought to meet diplomats from the Organisation of Amer-

ican States (OAS) who were holding separate talks at the airport with military junta leader Brigadier-General Raoul Cedras.

Mr. Paul and four other prominent politicians — including former presidential candidate Marc Bazin — were prevented from leaving on a private jet to fly to Caracas for talks with Venezuelan President Carlos Andres Perez.

"Aristide is not coming back," soldiers shouted at Mr. Paul. "If does, we will reduce the country to cinders," one said.

Earlier, angry soldiers burst into the airport meeting where OAS diplomats tried to persuade Gen. Cedras to allow Mr. Aristide to return to Haiti with reduced powers.

After a brief interruption, the soldiers left peacefully. The situation is very tense.

God only knows what will happen next," Colonel Alix Silva, a top Cedras aide, told Reuters as he left the four-hour airport meeting with OAS officials.

After the meeting, the OAS delegation hurried onto a waiting Canadian government jet and returned to Washington where they were expected to report to the full OAS Tuesday.

Mr. Aristide, a popular leftist Catholic priest who became Haiti's first democratically elected president, was toppled by the army on Sept. 30. The junta has accused him of human rights violations and said it would abide by the constitution.

Before returning to Caracas from Kingston on an aircraft supplied by the Venezuelan government, Mr. Aristide said only that he was "still hopeful" a solution to the crisis would be found.

WORLD NEWS IN BRIEF

Soviets to pull out of Poland by 1992

WARSAW (R) — The Soviet Union has agreed to withdraw its 45,000 troops from Poland by the end of 1992, paving the way for a treaty normalising relations between the two countries, the Polish Foreign Ministry said Tuesday. "There are still differences whether it will be the end of September or the end of December but there is no doubt they will all go in 1992," spokesman Grzegorz Dziemidowicz said. Warsaw initially said the troops must leave by the end of 1991 but then eased its position to mid-1992. Mr. Dziemidowicz said the Soviet and Polish foreign ministers would initial the treaty in Warsaw this month and sign separate agreements on the troop pullout and on the transit of 280,000 Soviet soldiers returning home from Germany. Moscow angered Polish negotiators last year by saying it could not withdraw its troops before the end of 1994, the deadline for its withdrawal from Germany. The most recent Soviet proposal had been mid-1993.

Former Chancellor Willy Brandt ill

BONN (R) — Former West German Chancellor Willy Brandt has cancelled all appointments this week because of illness, a spokeswoman for his office said Tuesday. She declined to confirm a newspaper report that Mr. Brandt, 77, chairman of the Socialist International, might be suffering from thrombosis, or blood clotting, in his legs. The daily newspaper Bild said Mr. Brandt felt sharp pains in his legs at the weekend and his wife took him to a clinic in Bonn for observation. It said Mr. Brandt, who won the 1971 Nobel Peace Prize for his "Ostpolitik" opening up ties with East Europe, cancelled a trip to Vienna for a conference on Yugoslavia by the Socialist International, a world body of social democratic parties.

Botha questions role of Commonwealth

CANBERRA (R) — South African Foreign Minister P. W. Botha said Tuesday the Commonwealth might have no role once the South African issue was settled. Mr. Botha, on a three-day visit to Australia, told reporters that while he thought the Commonwealth was important, the apartheid issue and South Africa had helped bind its members together. "You only have to look at their agenda of the past 20 years and then find out yourself what a decisively important role the South African issue played," Mr. Botha said. "With full respect, then, go and check what have they done apart from the apartheid issue. ... It would be interesting for me to see what else beyond fighting apartheid have they done as an organisation for the member states," Mr. Botha said.

Abrams pleads guilty in Iran-contra case

WASHINGTON (R) — Elliott Abrams, an assistant secretary of state in the Reagan administration, pleaded guilty Monday to twice withholding information from Congress during the investigation of the Iran-contra scandal. His action was part of a plea-bargain agreement with the Iran-contra special prosecutor, still pursuing a nearly five-year-old investigation of the scandal over secret sales of arms to Iran and the diversion of proceeds to Nicaraguan anti-government forces. "I plead guilty," Mr. Abrams said twice, after each of the two misdemeanor charges against him was read in federal court. He was charged with withholding information from the Senate Foreign Relations and House of Representatives Intelligence Committees about his knowledge of Iran-contra operations in 1986 when the scandal was just coming to light.

Khmer Rouge detains refugee leaders

BANGKOK (AP) — Khmer Rouge guerrillas have detained the civilian leaders of a rebel-controlled Cambodian refugee camp in Thailand, spreading fear among the camp's 44,000 residents, U.N. officials said Tuesday. The officials said the detention of the 16 administrators from the Site 8 camp could be a prelude to an attempt to force the refugees to move back into portions of Cambodia under Khmer Rouge control. The Khmer Rouge ruled Cambodia from 1975 until they were ousted in 1978 by Vietnamese troops. More than 1 million of the country's 8 million inhabitants died during the Khmer Rouge's radical attempt to

restructure Cambodian society. More than 500,000 refugees fled the civil war that erupted between the Vietnamese-installed government and an array of anti-government factions. The warring factions have agreed to sign a peace treaty this month in Paris.

Togo's premier safe after raid

LOME (R) — Togolese Prime Minister Kokou Koffigoh went on state television Tuesday to quell rumours that rebellious troops had arrested him. Mr. Koffigoh, in a brief appearance on TV, urged pro-government youths who took to the streets on rumours of his arrest to dismantle barricades and return home. A statement from the prime minister's office said he was safe and well. Mr. Koffigoh said a unit of armed troops came searching for him at 2 a.m. at the luxury hotel where he has resided since he was appointed premier last August by a pro-democracy national conference. He said hotel employees were forced to open his room, which he had already vacated, and the soldiers searched it from top to bottom. Mr. Koffigoh, 43, said he immediately alerted members of his transitional government. He thanked the people for quickly mobilising in the streets and the majority of the armed forces and paramilitary gendarmerie who has remained loyal.

Noriega defence to seek mistrial

MIAMI (R) — The lead lawyer in Gen. Manuel Noriega's drug and racketeering trial said Monday he planned to file a motion seeking a mistrial because a secret list of defence witnesses has ended up in the hands of the U.S. Justice Department. Asked when he would file the motion, Miami lawyer Frank Rubino shrugged as he left the courthouse and said, "I haven't had time." He could file as early as Tuesday. Mr. Rubino has made several moves in the past to have the charges dropped or a mistrial declared but U.S. district court Judge William Hoelwer has pressed on with the trial. Prosecutors have acknowledged that the confidential list of 38 witnesses ended up in government hands but say it has not compromised Gen. Noriega's defence. The U.S. Marshals Service is investigating the release of the list, which was apparently attached to a defence subpoena for Lewis Tambis, who served as U.S. ambassador to Colombia and Costa Rica in the 1980s. Mr. Tambis turned it over to the Justice Department.

Bush, Savimbi discuss Angolan peace

WASHINGTON (R) — Jonas Savimbi, leader of the 16-year guerrilla war against the Angolan government, urged President George Bush Monday to keep U.S. involvement strong to avoid delaying the peace process. Mr. Savimbi, whose National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) was backed by Washington before the civil war ended early this year, said he urged Mr. Bush to keep a "firm commitment to follow the process through so that the problems we may encounter ... should not derail the process." UNITA signed a ceasefire with the Moscow-backed Cuban-backed Luanda government on May 31 to end the war, which broke out soon after the country gained independence from Portugal in 1975. "It is the first time that the Angolans are at peace for a long, long time," Mr. Savimbi told reporters after talking with Mr. Bush. "It is also the first time that the Angolans are going to have elections. So we may have some problems."

Mozambique rivals start peace talks

ROME (R) — Negotiators seeking ways of ending the 15-year civil war in Mozambique began fresh talks with government representatives and said it was up to the country's Renamo rebels whether they led to peace. "I would say that securing a peace agreement at these talks is now completely up to the rebels," Labour Minister Teodoro Hunguana said, entering the eighth round of negotiations sponsored by Italy and Roman Catholic churchmen. Mediators, frustrated by the talks repeatedly stalling, revived them by going to Mozambique and Malawi last month to secure the agreement of President Joaquim Chissano and rebels leader Afonso Dhlakama to a basic agenda. There has been speculation that the two men could meet for the first time this week at an international peace vigil to be held on the Mediterranean island of Malta. Mr. Chissano has confirmed he will attend the Malta gathering.

COLUMN

World War II bombs found in Malaysian hospital

KUALA LUMPUR (R) — Malaysian police have detonated two World War II bombs found in the grounds of a mental hospital and are looking for more bombs, a hospital spokesman said. The bombs, discovered on Sunday near a rubbish dump on the grounds of the hospital in the southern state of Johor, the spokesman said. Malaysian police recently detonated about 400 bombs found in an ammunition dump near the hospital. The bombs, believed to have been left by Japanese occupation troops, each weighed about 70 kilograms.

Thailand appeals for help to end 'sex tourism'

MANILA (R) — Thailand appealed Monday to governments to help end international "sex tourism" saying the spread of AIDS could only be curbed through global cooperation. Meechai Veeravattana, a Thai minister in charge of tourism and social affairs, said acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) heralded a major disaster for Asia. Unless the spread of the disease was checked it could spell huge losses in terms of legitimate tourism and the export of Asian labour. Speaking on the opening day of a 40-nation conference on social problems in Asia and the Pacific, Mr. Meechai said many countries still preferred to keep quiet about AIDS. "The longer we hide, the greater the suffering, the less chance we have of being able to do something about it in the long run," he told delegates at the five-day conference organised by the United Nations' Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). He appealed to governments to help end sex tours by foreigners to the massage parlours and go-go bars of Bangkok, Manila and other Asian cities. "And the people who come from abroad on these sex tours, I would like to appeal to their governments," said Mr. Meechai, known as Thailand's "condom king" for his work in encouraging family planning.

Surgeons graft man's severed ear to his thigh

LONDON (R) — British surgeons grafted a man's right ear to his thigh after it was bitten off in a fight. Doctors explained it was too mangled to stitch back on to his head and would "live" on the leg of Patrick Neary, 32, for five months where it would have a better chance. "The ear was cleaned up as well as could be expected, and was then grafted on to Mr. Neary's right thigh, where it will stay for around five months," said Dominic Conlin of the Queen Victoria Hospital, West Sussex, in southern England. "His position will then be assessed again, and hopefully his ear can be moved to its rightful position," he added.

3 on trial for stealing heiress's art as she starved

DRAGUIGNAN, France (R) — Three people went on trial in this southern French town Monday accused of locking up an old woman and letting her die in order to steal her multi-million-dollar art collection. Nurse Joelle Pessel and two accomplices were accused of confining heiress Suzanne de Canson to a tightly-shuttered garret and allowing her to waste away as they appropriated her 300-million-franc (\$50-million-dollar) fortune. The prosecution says Pessel, who nursed Ms. De Canson for five years, persuaded the old woman to leave her fortune to Ms. Pessel's grandmother. The grandmother was already dead, making Ms. Pessel sole heiress. Visitors who saw "De Canson" in her room before her death in 1986 said she was horribly emaciated, appeared heavily drugged and had been driven to eating her own excrement. The defence rejects the charges, saying Ms. Pessel repeatedly called a doctor when Ms. De Canson was sick. Ms. Pessel was arrested in 1988 after one of the most valuable paintings in the collection, Seville Gentleman by 17th-century painter Bartolomeo Murillo, went on show at the Louvre Museum. Pessel had sold it for 10 million francs (\$1.7 million).